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CLAUDIA: LATEST TRAITORS SERIES IS SO TWISTED ...I LOVE IT

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(TERMS & CONDITIONS APPLY. SEE VOUCHER FOR FULL DETAILS)

Proposals to overhaul service could result in full checks only every 10 years

NEW CARE HOME INSPECTION PLANS 'PUT RESIDENTS AT RISK'

EXCLUSIVE

BY **GILES SHELDRICK** Chief Reporter

THOUSANDS of care home residents could be put at risk under a shake-up of inspections.

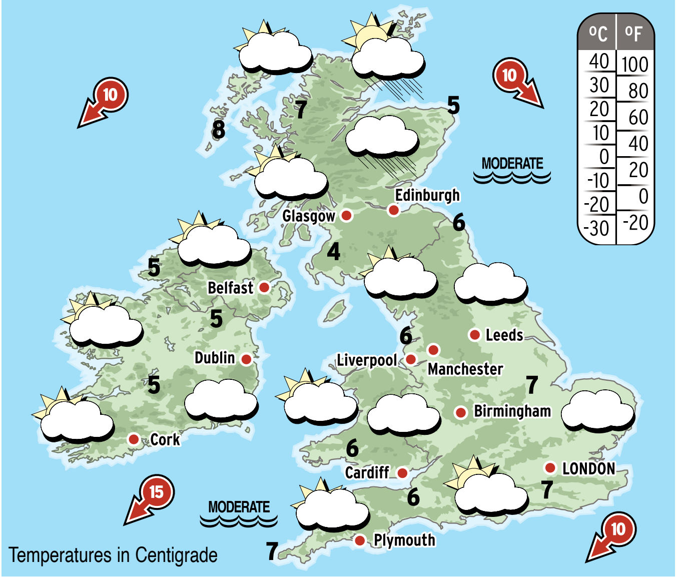
Campaigners warn some services might go for up to 10 years without being fully assessed amid changes to how the Care Quality Commission

TURN TO PAGE 4

Screen legend Brigitte Bardot dies aged 91

SEE PAGES 8&9

WEATHER FORECAST



Temperatures in Centigrade

Today's summary: Cloudy and cool, mild later

North West: Overcast with a chill. Clearing skies later. Light winds, becoming breezy by evening. High 7C (45F).

Northern Ireland: Cloudy throughout. Brief sunny spells later. Light winds, feeling chilly. High 6C (43F).

Wales: Cloudy with some sun later. Brisk winds, turning milder in the afternoon. High 6C (43F).

Midlands: Overcast throughout, becoming cooler later. Gentle breezes, temperatures remain chilly. High 6C (43F).

North East/Yorks: Cloudy skies persist. Some brighter spells later. Breezy with a chill in the air. High 6C (43F).

Scotland: Cloudy with light wind. Clearing slightly, breezy later. Chilly throughout the day. High 4C (39F).

East Anglia: Cloudy skies persist. Bright spells later. Breezy with moderate winds and cool air. High 8C (46F).

London/South East: Mostly cloudy. Clearing briefly. Light winds, turning breezy. Cool, becoming milder. High 7C (45F).

South: Chilly start, mostly sunny, turning cloudy later. Moderate breeze, feeling quite cool. High 7C (45F).

South West: Cloudy start, brightening later. Breezy with a gentle wind. Cool throughout the day. High 6C (43F).

Channel Isles: Cloudy with sunny spells later. Fresh breezes, becoming gusty. Cool by evening. High 6C (43F).

Sea: North Sea: Moderate. Irish Sea: Moderate. Channel: Moderate.

UK OUTLOOK TOMORROW: Mostly cloudy with light winds, temperatures remaining cool. Chance of brief sunny spells later, but rain unlikely.

SIX-DAY FORECAST

Temperatures in Centigrade

	TUE		WED		THU		FRI		SAT		SUN	
	min	max	min	max	min	max	min	max	min	max	min	max
London	0	7	0	6	2	6	-1	6	-1	5	-2	4
Belfast	-1	6	1	4	2	6	1	5	0	4	0	3
Birmingham	-2	6	1	5	2	6	-1	5	-1	4	-2	3
Cardiff	-1	6	1	5	3	7	0	7	0	6	-1	5
Glasgow	-1	4	5	7	2	7	0	5	-1	5	-1	4
Manchester	-1	6	3	5	2	6	-1	4	-1	4	-2	3
Newcastle	-1	6	3	5	1	6	0	3	-1	3	-2	3
Norwich	1	8	1	6	2	6	0	5	0	4	-1	4
Plymouth	2	7	3	6	5	7	2	8	2	6	2	6

Britain yesterday

24 hours to 5pm	SUN (hrs)	RAIN (ins)	TEMP (min)	(max)
Aberdeen	0.0	0.00	3	5
Aberporth	4.4	0.00	4	6
Alnwick	0.0	0.00	7	7
Belfast	0.0	0.00	3	6
Birmingham	0.1	0.00	6	6
B'mouth	0.0	0.00	5	7
Bristol	1.0	0.00	6	7
Cardiff	0.0	0.00	6	6
Durham	0.1	0.00	6	6
Edinburgh	0.0	0.00	5	6
Glasgow	0.0	0.00	4	6
Hull	0.0	0.00	6	7
Ipswich	0.0	0.00	6	7
Leeds	0.2	0.00	6	6
Lincoln	0.0	0.01	6	6
London	0.0	0.00	6	7
Manchester	0.0	0.00	3	7
Oxford	0.0	0.00	6	6
S'hampton	1.2	0.00	7	7
St Andrews	0.0	0.00	5	5

Moon, sun and tides

MOON rises: 11.56am, sets: 1.57am
SUN rises London: 8.06am, sets: 3.59pm
Manchester rises: 8.25am, sets: 3.57pm

Full Moon
03 January

HIGH TIDE

London B'ge	(7.43am), (8.37pm)
Liverpool	(5.25am), (5.54pm)
Greenock	(6.32am), (7.01pm)
Dover	(5.15am), (6.00pm)

Britain Extremes:
(24 hours to 2pm yesterday)

Warmest: St. Mary's 10C (50F)
Coldest: Altnaharra -6C (21F)
Wettest: East malling 0.03in.
Sunniest: Aberdaron 6.5hr.

Lighting-up times

Belfast	4.05pm-8.46am
Birmingham	4.01pm-8.18am
Bristol	4.09pm-8.15am
Glasgow	3.50pm-8.47am
London	3.59pm-8.06am
Manchester	3.57pm-8.25am
Newcastle	3.45pm-8.31am

Europe forecast

Today			Tomorrow		
Amsterdam	Cloudy	7C/45F	**Amsterdam**	Fair	6C/43F
Brussels	Fog	2C/36F	**Brussels**	Fair	5C/41F
Dublin	Cloudy	8C/46F	**Dublin**	Cloudy	8C/46F
Frankfurt	Fair	2C/36F	**Frankfurt**	Sunny	4C/39F
Geneva	Sunny	5C/41F	**Geneva**	Sunny	3C/37F
Lisbon	Sunny	14C/57F	**Lisbon**	Sunny	13C/55F
Madrid	Fair	12C/54F	**Madrid**	Sunny	11C/52F
Paris	Sunny	3C/37F	**Paris**	Sunny	5C/41F
Rome	Sunny	15C/59F	**Rome**	Sunny	15C/59F

Around the world yesterday

		C	F
Amsterdam	Fair	6	43
Athens	Sunny	14	57
Barcelona	Fair	14	57
Berlin	Sunny	2	36
Budapest	Fair	4	39
Cairo	Fair	18	64
Cape Town	Sunny	28	82
Casablanca	Thndr	14	57
Corfu	Sunny	14	57
Dublin	Cloudy	7	45
Dubrovnik	Sunny	14	57
Faro	Shwrs	12	54
Florence	Sunny	7	45
Gibraltar	Shwrs	13	55
Guernsey	Cloudy	7	45
Hong Kong	Sunny	20	68
Istanbul	Rain	8	46
Jersey	Cloudy	6	43
Larnaca	Sunny	16	61
Las Palmas	Fair	20	68
Los Angeles	Sunny	16	61
Luxor	Sunny	21	70
Malaga	Rain	13	55
Mallorca	Fair	15	59
Malta	Sunny	17	63
Melbourne	Sunny	23	73
Miami	Sunny	25	77
Moscow	Snow	-2	28
Nairobi	Thndr	19	66
New Delhi	Sunny	18	64
New York	Snow	-2	28
Nice	Sunny	14	57
Nicosia	Sunny	13	55
Perth	Sunny	28	82
Prague	Fair	1	34
Singapore	Thndr	29	84
Stockholm	Sunny	2	36
Sydney	Shwrs	20	68
Tel Aviv	Shwrs	14	57
Tenerife	Sunny	22	72
Toronto	Fair	-7	19
Tunis	Fair	15	59
Venice	Sunny	8	46
Vienna	Fair	3	37
Warsaw	Cloudy	2	36

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Travellers face huge hike as airports hit with 295% rates rise

BY **HOLLY WILLIAMS**

The cost of flights is set to soar. Inset, Manchester one of hardest hit

AIR travellers are being warned to brace for ticket price hikes as regional airports face "unprecedented" rises in property tax next year.

It comes as analysis of official government data revealed they are among those facing the steepest increases in business rates of any sector in the UK amid an overhaul of property valuations underpinning the tax.

While London's Heathrow and Gatwick are also being hit by the eye-watering sector-wide increase of 295%, figures show that the most extreme cases are focused outside of the capital. Alex Probyn, practice leader for Europe and Asia-Pacific property tax at Ryan, said: "With an unprecedented 295% sector-wide uplift, regional airports simply cannot absorb a cost shock of this magnitude.

"These increases will inevitably flow through the system: first into airport charges, then into airline costs and ultimately into ticket prices."

Most airports will see bills more than double over the next three years.

Manchester Airport is among the worst affected, with its business rates set to surge by £4.2million to £18.1m next year, according to Ryan's data.

Bristol will be hit by a £1.2m rise to £5.2m, while Birmingham expects a £1.8m hike to £7.6m.

Newcastle is in line for a £244,755 increase to £1.1m.

Airport operators have also warned the tax blow may hold back investment in the sector.

Manchester Airports Group said: "Increases of more than 100% mean we have to look again at our plans to invest more than £2billion over the next five years. It is inevitable air travel will become more expensive as the industry absorbs these costs. That impacts hard-working people throughout the country and makes global trade harder for businesses."

Trade group AirportsUK, which is forming a response to the Treasury's consultation on the rates, said the plans were "short-sighted" and would "have a knock-on effect for businesses that depend on airport connectivity".

Ryan's calculation of Valuation Office Agency data found rateable values jumped more than six-fold in some cases in the latest property revaluation.

CORRECTIONS AND COMPLAINTS

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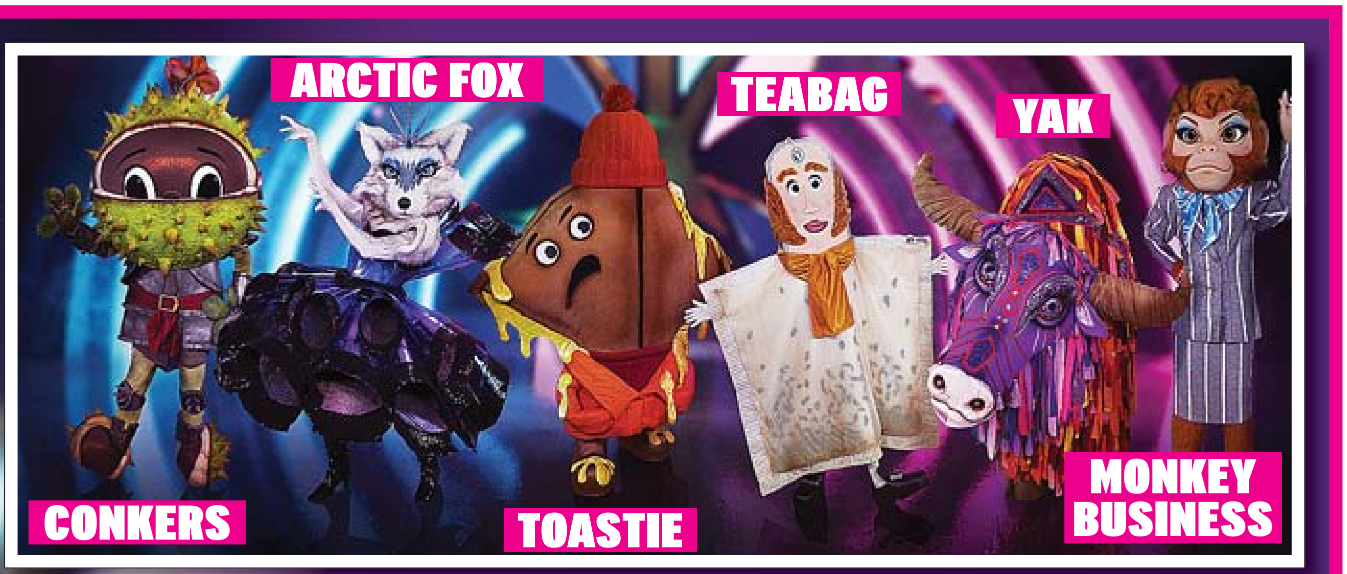
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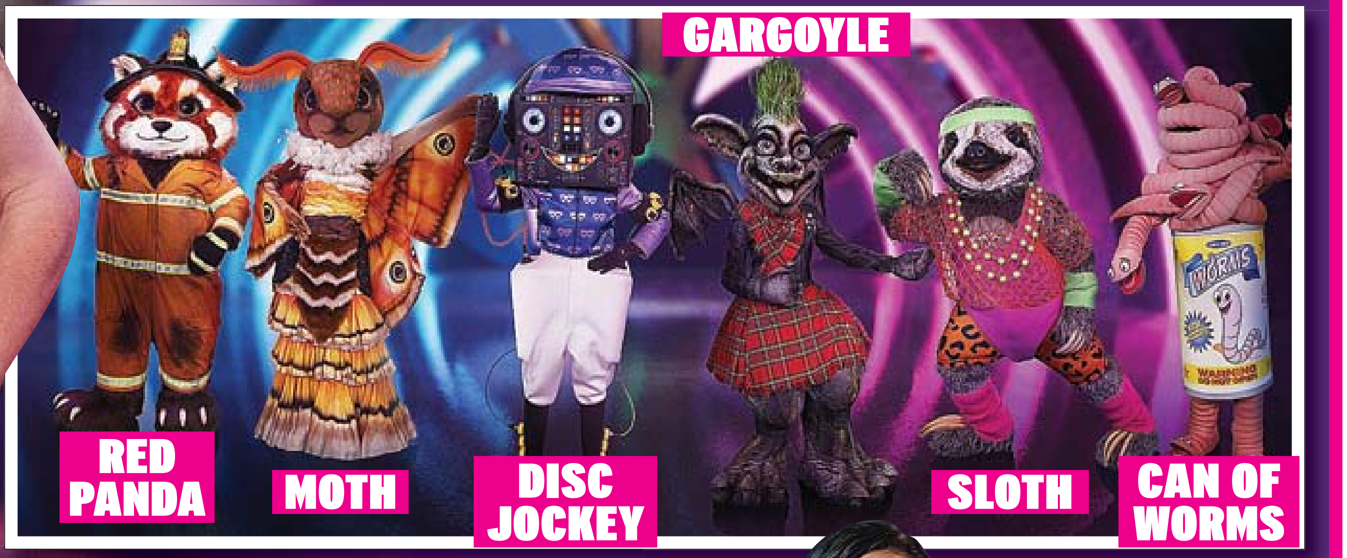

GARGOYLE
RED PANDA
MOTH
DISC JOCKEY
SLOTH
CAN OF WORMS

Who's that curl? New Masked Singer look for Davina

BY **NICOLA METHVEN**

THE Masked Singer is back and it is not only the crooning celebrities who are unrecognisable.

Davina McCall debuts a bold curly hairdo as she rings in the changes on the show, which include having a full band on stage for the first time.

The panel will have to identify the lead singer of groups such as Goldfish with their band No Trout and Emperor Penguin and the Antarctic Funkeys.

Davina, Jonathan Ross, Mo Gilligan and Maya Jama will also hazard a guess at 12 other performers in the new series, which kicks off with four unmaskings in the opening double bill at the weekend.

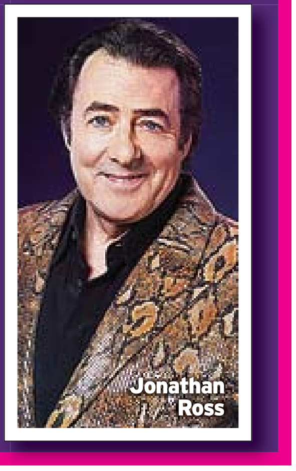
Maya revealed her favourite character is the Can of Worms, saying: “I was so impressed by the timekeeping and the rapping ability of a massive can of worms.”

● *The Masked Singer is on ITV1 and ITVX on Saturday and Sunday at 6.30pm.*

Maya Jama

Host Joel Dommett

Mo Gilligan


Jonathan Ross

Sir Robert criticised tribunals

‘Judges are stretching the criteria for benefits’

BY **KATIE HARRIS**

POLITICIANS must take back control of welfare policy from judges, a think tank says.

The Policy Exchange claims benefits tribunals have extended eligibility criteria – and just one change to Personal Independent Payments would save £750million.

In a report, it calls for people who cannot plan and follow journeys due to some mental health conditions to lose the mobility element of PIP, the main disability grant.

These include eating, depressive and mixed anxiety disorders and stress reactions. Former Tory justice minister Sir Robert Buckland said in the foreword: “It is in Policy Exchange’s plea that Parliament end its practice of legislating on eligibility criteria in a vague and undefined way, and that the discretionary power it has given to judges to interpret the law should be returned to the lawmakers.”

Fairer

He added that benefit spending “is clearly unsustainable”.

Report author Jean-André Prager said: “The appeals system has become a substitute for good decision-making rather than a check on it.

“We need to restore parliamentary authority, improve accountability, and use technology to deliver a fairer, more sustainable system.”

Health and disability benefits are forecast to cost £100billion in 2030.

The government said it inherited a broken system but was tackling “the backlog of people waiting for a work capability assessment” to “save nearly £2billion by the end of the decade”. It also said it was changing Universal Credit and PIP to ensure it is “fit and fair for the future”.

CAMPAIGNERS’ DAMNING

‘Significant allow poor

FROM PAGE ONE

assesses providers. There is no timetable now for inspections, in which homes are rated outstanding, good, requires improvement or inadequate.

But proposals for routine inspections to be carried out sporadically suggest that inspectors would not be able to look at every aspect of the service on each occasion, which could leave “significant gaps in oversight that could allow poor care to go unregulated”, campaigners warned.

Responding to proposals made in a consultation launched by the CQC in October, Care Rights UK said: “We have significant concerns about the proposal that routine inspections generally occur every three to five years.

“The consultation also suggests they would not expect to look comprehensively at every area of every service or cover every part of the assessment framework every time they inspect a service. This means that some parts of a service may not be assessed for 10 years at worst.”

Inspections are critical to understanding what happens in care settings and addressing poor care.

Campaigners have warned the CQC that it will not get a full picture by relying on whistleblowing or complaints being raised.

Research found 56% of those who witnessed poor care did not report it.

Health Secretary Wes Streeting branded the CQC “not fit for purpose” last year after a government-ordered review into the watchdog found a catalogue of failings including an inability to identify poor performance.

Dr Penny Dash’s damning probe into care regulation found the oldest rating for a social care organisation was more than eight years old.

There are currently 14,714 care homes overseen by the CQC. Figures obtained by the Express show that of the 13,708 currently rated, 138 are classed as inadequate, 2,265 as requiring improvement, 10,672 good, and 593 outstanding – meaning one in five is still failing.

Dire

I’m a Celebrity...Get Me Out of Here! star and care campaigner Ruthie Henshall has told the Express that care quality is now so dire she would rather be shot than dumped in a home.

Actress Ruthie, 58, was banned from hugging or holding her mum Gloria who battled Parkinson’s and dementia before her death aged 87 in 2021 at the height of the pandemic.

She said: “I have already asked my sister, ‘please take me out’. If I have dementia, and I have any capacity, there is no way I am going into a care home. What I witnessed and went through with mum was so horrific.”

Spring Lodge Care Home in Ipswich, Suffolk, where Gloria was a resident, was ranked “requires improvement” by the CQC after an inspection in August 2021.

It was given the same score in an unannounced inspection in October 2022, but there has been no subsequent visit in more than three years.

The CQC said it carried out 2,009 residential social care inspections between January 1 and December 9. It said the average time between visits was 758 days or 2.1 years.

Earlier this year ex-CQC chairman Sir Julian Hartley said the public could no longer trust safety ratings when choosing a care home as the watchdog had “lost its way” with too few inspections and reports that were years out of date. In some cases it meant families had no idea of the standard of care loved ones had been receiving.

Sir Julian was appointed to a £285,000-a-year role a year ago to clear up a catalogue of disasters. He quit in October – the same month the CQC launched its consultation on proposals for reform that could include making all care home inspections unannounced by default.

Before he left he said: “If you’re thinking about where to put your mum in a care home, you want to have reliable information that’s up to date.

“Effectively the CQC is not delivering on its operational performance. It’s not delivering for people that use services. The Express has been an insistent voice in calling for improvement in social care, which is why I’m committing to readers that we will do better as a regulator, so we can help services provide better care.

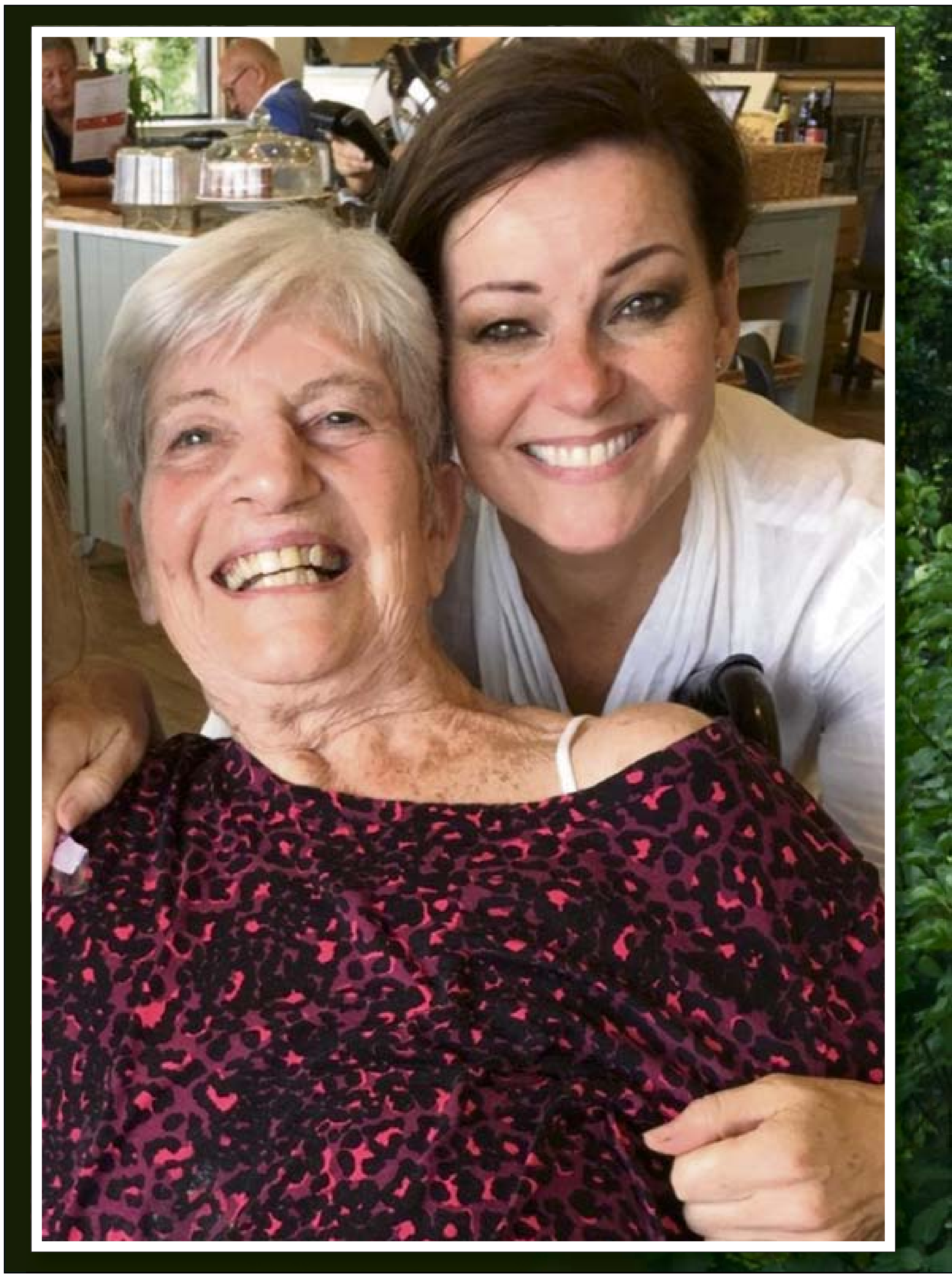
“This won’t happen overnight. But while there is too much poor care, there are also many services delivering kind, compassionate, outstanding care – and we want to help make that the reality for everyone.”

Failure to provide reliable and up-to-date information means some families who are forking out £1,500 a week for basic levels of care for their loved ones are turning to a new Tripadvisor-style ratings system.

OpenScore claims to be the UK’s first live, continually updated view of care home quality, ranking facilities daily on a live, interactive map.

Founder Debbie Harris said: “Care homes can wait years for a new CQC inspection.

“These old ratings hide the truth and mask real problems, while also holding back homes that



Former CQC chairman Sir Julian said watchdog had lost its way

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VERDICT OVER INSPECTIONS SHAKE-UP

gaps in oversight can care to go unregulated’

Nurse with care home resident. Left, actress Ruthie Henshall with her mum Gloria

EXPRESS VOTE

Will care home residents be put at risk if full inspections are delayed?

YES: 0901 133 4440 NO: 0901 133 4441

Yes text DXYES to 63333 No text DXNO to 63333

(Calls cost 50p plus network access charge; texts cost 50p plus standard network rate)

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have made genuine progress. For instance, the average time between CQC inspections in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead is 5.25 years – the highest of anywhere in the country and in stark contrast to OpenScore’s data, which updates daily.

“That gap hurts families – and it hurts homes working hard to improve.”

Layla Moran, chair of the Commons health and social care committee, said: “Our country’s social care system continues to languish without any reform in the near future, so it is even more essential the public at least has a reliable regulator that holds services to account. No wonder people are turning to other sources for advice.”

The CQC is looking at proposals to improve the assessment of health and care services as part of a strategy called “better regulation, better care”.

Chris Badger, of CQC, said: “We know we need to increase our rate of assessments to make sure that we update the ratings of providers and give the public confidence in quality of care.

Commitment

“Since accepting the recommendations in Penny Dash’s review last year, we have worked hard to develop how we fulfil our vital role of helping people receive a high level of care as well as supporting providers to improve.

“This included making a clear commitment to increasing the number of assessments we carry out. While we might not inspect a care home for a period of time, we do also continuously monitor services so that we can respond to issues that arise. This allows us to focus our resources in the places where there is highest risk.

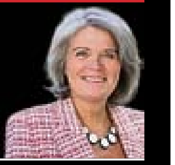
“When people share their concerns about poor care with us, they can have confidence that we will act to hold providers to account to ensure people are kept safe and treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.”

The Department of Health and Social Care said: “We have taken decisive action to improve the performance of the regulator. We are supporting the CQC and holding it to account to ensure that improvements are made rapidly.”

OPINION: PAGE 12

COMMENT

DEBBIE HARRIS



Founder of OpenScore

OVER a decade ago, I sat trying to find a safe care home for my Aunty Margaret.

I had no reliable way to judge quality, only fragmented information and chance. Thousands of families still recognise that uncertainty.

For many years, the Care Quality Commission provided a crucial point of reference.

The environment has changed though.

Services are more complex, staffing pressures more acute, and expectations higher.

Inspection cycles have lengthened and the result is that families are often relying on information that no longer reflects the day-to-day reality inside a home.

Timely

We created OpenScore to reduce that uncertainty, not to replace the regulator.

A national inspectorate will never have the resources to observe every home continuously and nor should it be expected to. Families should still have access to timely insight though.

That is where digital data can play a practical role. OpenScore acts as a live signal drawn from a home’s own records.

It highlights patterns, changes and trends that matter for quality, giving families a clearer sense of how a home is performing today.

It does not rewrite the regulator’s judgment, and it does not attempt to replicate an inspection.

It provides a complementary view, rooted in everyday practice, so that choosing care does not have to feel like guesswork.

Starmer told to deport Egyptian activist over 'abhorrent' past tweets

BY **KATIE HARRIS**
Senior Political

SIR Keir Starmer was yesterday urged to deport an Egyptian activist, days after hailing his arrival in Britain.

The Prime Minister is facing an intense backlash after saying he was "delighted" that Alaa Abd El-Fattah had been reunited with family members in the UK following his release from detention in Egypt.

But deleted historical social media posts have emerged which appear to show Mr Abd El-Fattah branding Britons "dogs and monkeys", calling for Zionists to be killed and for violence against the police, and expressing hatred of white people.

It is understood that Sir Keir was unaware of the statements when he publicly welcomed him to Britain on Boxing Day. The Egyptian's alleged comments were described as "abhorrent" by the Foreign Office.

Sacked

Shadow Justice Secretary Robert Jenrick yesterday called on the PM to strip the Egyptian-British dual national of his citizenship and deport him.

Mr Jenrick said: "If the Prime Minister really was unaware that El-Fattah was an extremist, he should immediately retract his comments expressing 'delight' at his arrival and begin proceedings to revoke his citizenship and deport him.

"There is no way El-Fattah, with his anti-British, antisemitic and homophobic views, should be in the UK.

"El-Fattah's views were well known as he had a European peace prize rescinded in 2015. The civil servants who supposedly withheld this crucial piece of information from ministers should be sacked."

Reform UK leader Nigel Farage said that he had reported Mr Abd El-Fattah to counter-terrorism police.

Mr Farage said: "Tory and Labour both open our doors to the wrong people. They are as bad as each other." Mr Abd El-Fattah was detained in Egypt in 2019 and sentenced to five years in prison on charges of spreading false news in 2021.

Alaa Abd El-Fattah is reunited with mother Laila Soueif. Above, Robert Jenrick criticised the PM

His imprisonment was branded a breach of international law by UN investigators, and he was released after being pardoned by Egyptian president Abdel Fattah el-Sisi.

The PM said last Friday that he was "delighted" Mr Abd El-Fattah had arrived in the UK.

He said his release, which the previous Tory government also lobbied for, had been a "top priority".

Sir Keir's response came under fire from Jewish organisations, with the Board of Deputies of British Jews saying there was an "urgent need" to find out whether Mr Abd El-Fattah still held the views allegedly expressed online.

A Foreign Office spokesman said: "Mr El-Fattah is a British citizen. It has been a long-standing priority under successive governments to work for his release from detention.

"The government condemns Mr El-Fattah's historic tweets and considers them to be abhorrent."

Reform to prosecute officials who let in foreign sex offenders

BY **KATIE HARRIS**

CIVIL servants who knowingly grant asylum to foreign sex offenders could be jailed if Reform UK gets into power.

Nigel Farage's party has promised to criminalise "dishonestly determining an asylum claim" with a maximum penalty of two years' imprisonment.

A police taskforce would be set up, backed by the National Crime Agency, and bureaucrats who let sex offenders into Britain would face prosecution and sanctions including dismissal and being stripped of their pension.

Mr Farage said: "Any civil servant who wilfully allows migrants to enter the UK when they know that they pose a risk will be held accountable for their actions. I will not allow the safety of our women and girls to be sacrificed on the altar of misguided liberalism."

Reform's head of policy Zia Yusuf said: "Consecutive Labour and Conservative governments have been shamefully granting asylum to dangerous foreign sex offenders. A Reform UK government will create a taskforce to go through all these decisions and ensure civil servants who knowingly granted sex offenders asylum are held to account. Reform will prioritise the safety of women and girls over the rights of foreign sex offenders."

Reform UK's Zia Yusuf

Labour announced in April that foreign sex offenders would be effectively barred from gaining asylum in the UK under a new law.

A government spokesman said: "Civil servants do vital work securing UK borders and processing returns so that foreign national offenders are removed from our streets.

"Since the government came into power, we have removed nearly 50,000 people with no right to be on British soil and asylum-related returns are up 27% compared with the previous year.

"We will not allow foreign criminals and illegal migrants to exploit our laws.

"We are reforming human rights laws and replacing the broken appeals system so we can scale up deportations."

Play by rules, says Mahmood

Diplomats sanctioned in backlash over illegals

BY **KATIE HARRIS**

BRITAIN has slapped visa restrictions on the Democratic Republic of Congo – the first time a country has been sanctioned for failing to take back illegal migrants and criminals.

DRC diplomats and ministers were stripped of their preferential visa treatment and fast-track entry has been revoked for all its citizens.

Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood threatened a full visa ban if it continued to refuse deportations.

DRC was last month issued a warning along with Namibia and Angola, which have since agreed to co-operate.

The Home Secretary said: "We expect countries to play by the rules. If one of their citizens has no right to be here they must take them back.

Privilege

"Now's the time for the DRC to do the right thing. Take your citizens back or lose the privilege of entering our country.

"This is just the start of the measures I'm taking to secure our border and ramp up the removal of those with no right to be here."

A government source added: "Mahmood won't hesitate to go further and ban visas to other countries who refuse to take citizens back."

Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper said: "I have instructed our diplomatic network around the world to make returns a top priority. People who come to the UK illegally, overstay their visas or commit crimes in our country should expect to be returned."

The sanctions mirror measures US president Donald Trump placed on nearly 40 countries.

Tory Shadow Home Secretary Chris Philp said: "Labour only remove 5% of small boat arrivals, so it's little wonder illegal immigrants keep flooding across the Channel."

We have the makings of a deal, says Trump amid crunch talks

Donald Trump greets Volodymyr Zelensky ahead of talks at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida yesterday. Left, Vladimir Putin

BY **ALLISTER HAGGER**

DONALD Trump last night held out hope for a "rapid" end to the war in Ukraine as he hosted Volodymyr Zelensky for crunch talks at his Florida mansion.

The US president said he believed there were "the makings of a deal" to end the nearly four-year conflict sparked by Russia's invasion of its neighbour.

Speaking alongside Mr Zelensky outside his Mar-a-Lago resort yesterday, Mr Trump said he believed Kremlin despot Vladimir Putin was "serious about peace".

The president said: "Too many people have died and I think both presidents want to make a deal. We have the makings of a deal that's good for Ukraine, good for everybody. There's nothing more important."

Mr Trump added that it would include a "strong" security agreement for Ukraine and "European nations are very much involved". He continued: "It will either end or it will go on for a long time and millions of additional people are going to be dead and nobody wants that. We can move very rapidly."

Mr Zelensky said he would discuss the contentious issue of territorial concessions with the US leader, which have so far been a red line for his country. The Ukrainian president thanked Mr Trump for hosting him and said he hoped the meeting would "bring peace as quickly as possible".

US special envoy Steve Witkoff was involved in discussions

It was the third time Mr Trump has hosted the Ukrainian leader this year.

Previous meetings have produced various outcomes, with the first in February ending in a bust-up between the pair in the Oval Office at the White House.

A meeting in August was more positive. Ahead of yesterday's talks, Mr Trump held a surprise call with Putin, which the US president said was "good, very productive".

Moscow said both leaders agreed a temporary ceasefire would not solve the conflict. If true, it would be an ominous sign for Kyiv, particularly for a proposal to halt hostilities to allow for a referendum in Ukraine on any peace deal.

The meeting came after Russia launched missile and drone attacks on Kyiv.

Mr Trump and the Russian leader were due to speak again after the meeting between the Ukrainians and his top brass.

Support

Alongside Mr Trump, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, US defence secretary Pete Hegseth and special envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner were present.

The Florida talks were the latest stage in Mr Trump's year-long effort to secure a ceasefire in Ukraine, having previously said he would end the war on the first day of his second term in office. Mr Zelensky has said the draft peace plan includes a US commitment to provide guarantees mirroring the Nato alliance's Article 5, which means an attack on Ukraine would trigger a collective military response from the US and its allies.

But key details are still to be worked out, with territorial concessions in the eastern regions of Luhansk and Donetsk the most sensitive of the issues to be discussed.

Russia is also likely to object to a role for Nato forces in monitoring a ceasefire, which European leaders including Keir Starmer and French president Emmanuel Macron have said must form part of any deal.

Mr Zelensky spoke to Sir Keir ahead of the talks, thanking him for his "constant co-ordination". The PM reaffirmed the UK's "unwavering support", said No 10.

LIFE IN KYIV

JOHN MARONE

Despatch from the frontline

WITH Christmas behind them, the New Year ahead and their president on his way to America to hammer out a peace deal, Ukrainians might have gone to bed on the evening of December 26 feeling slightly hopeful.

But the Russians had other ideas.

Throughout the long night and well into the next morning, the capital was pummelled by almost 500 drones and 40 missiles, leaving two dead, 30 injured and buildings set aflame in nearly every district.

When it was finally over, 40% of homes had been left without heat in freezing temperatures, while the rest went dark as an unscheduled blackout came into force.

But it wasn't over.

Midnight had just struck when the now ominously familiar sound of an exploding ballistic missile rang out in the night.

It was made particularly frightening as it had not been preceded by an air raid siren. From there on out, explosion after explosion split the nocturnal silence, as air defences attempted to shoot down jet-powered drones racing from one end of the city to the next.

The break of day offered little respite from the onslaught.

Drones could be heard humming overhead well into the morning, forcing many to remain hunkered down in Metro stations.

Stranded commuters added to the congestion, as trains on lines that cross bridges over the Dnipro River were standing idle on their tracks while the air alerts remained in effect.

Building damaged by Russian attack on Kyiv

Mobile communications were also disrupted, leaving citizens figuratively as well as literally in the dark. Zelensky called the attack, "Russia's answer to our peace efforts, and this really shows that Putin doesn't want peace."

The people of Kyiv called it more of the same. Alexander, who works in a shopping mall on the city's Left Bank, which was particularly hard hit, said there were so many strikes that he couldn't point out the Russians' intended targets.

"Pick a spot. Nearly everywhere is targeted, particularly the heating plants."

Tatyana, a grandmother who lives in a flat in the centre of the capital with her toddler grandson, said it seemed like the air defences and drones were battling right outside her window.

"Where were we supposed to run in the middle of the night?

"And then do what – sit in a dark basement till morning with a small child?"

‘I gave my youth and beauty to men, I give my wisdom and experience to animals...’

Brigitte dances in 1956’s And God Created Woman

BY **DAN WARBURTON**

HER breakthrough hit was called And God Created Woman, but Brigitte Bardot always strived to be the architect of her own life and career.

Thrust into the limelight by her own husband, director Roger Vadim, 20-year-old Brigitte inflamed the strait-laced censors of 1956 by dancing the mambo in a skirt slit to the waist. The director’s vision of turning his wife into “the unattainable fantasy of all married men” came true and she was ruthlessly marketed as an icon of sexual liberation in changing times.

But Brigitte, who died yesterday aged 91, was never happy to be merely someone’s fantasy. Despite starring in more than 50 films and becoming world-famous, she was frustrated in her ambition to become a serious actress.

And far from revelling in her role as a “sex kitten”, she struggled with objectification.

On her 26th birthday in 1960 she attempted suicide. And at the height of her fame in 1973 she retired from acting aged 39 to focus on her passion of animal rights.

“I gave my youth and beauty to men,” she said. “I give my wisdom and experience to animals.”

Campaigning

This compassion was not always extended to every member of her own species: Brigitte was convicted six times for inciting racial hatred.

But she will be remembered for her tireless campaigning as much as her beauty – exactly the legacy she wanted for herself.

Born in Paris in 1934, Bardot and sister Marie-Jeanne grew up in a luxurious apartment not far from the Eiffel Tower. Her mother enrolled her in ballet classes from the age of seven and she trained at the National Superior Conservatory of Paris for Music and Dance.

Aged 15, a family friend encouraged Bardot to pose for the cover of Elle magazine, where photographers said she embodied the new “jeune fille” – young girl – style.

The pictures also caught the attention of film director Marc Allegret.

Screen tests for acting were unsuccessful but Brigitte and Marc’s assistant – Roger Vadim – began an affair. Brigitte’s parents threatened to send her to England but she tried to take her own life and was eventually allowed to marry Roger when she turned 18 in 1952.

After And God Created Woman, Brigitte went on to star in 1959’s Voulez-vous Danser Avec Moi?, as well as alongside Sami Frey in The Truth in 1960, directed by Henri-Georges Clouzot. One of her most notable collaborations was with French-Swiss filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard, who directed her in Contempt in 1963 and Masculin Feminin in 1966.

A teenage John Lennon went to bed each night looking up at a life-size picture of Brigitte on his ceiling, while a young Bob Dylan’s first ever piece of music was called Song for Brigitte.

And in 1958, the Vatican put her figure on display at an exhibition to represent Evil – no such thing as bad publicity, they say.

After divorcing Roger in 1957, Brigitte struck up a romance with actor Jacques Charrier. They married in 1959 and her first and only child, Nicolas-Jacques Charrier, was born on January 11, 1960. Brigitte would later go on to say: “I’m not made to be a mother.”

The marriage ended in 1962 and a later union with German millionaire playboy Gunter Sachs was similarly short-lived, ending in 1969.

Brigitte also had flings with musicians Sacha Distel and Serge Gainsbourg and actor Warren Beatty, among others – though Sean Connery found his advances spurned.

Brigitte was not to marry again until 1992, as she focused on her second career, retreating to the French Riviera resort of Saint-Tropez, where she lived until her death. In an interview on her 73rd birthday, in 2007, she said: “Man is an insatiable predator. I don’t care about my past glory.

“That means nothing in the face of an animal that suffers, since it has no power, no words to defend itself.”

Controversial

In a 2011 letter to conservation group WWF, Brigitte told of her life-changing visit to Canada in the 1980s when she witnessed its seal cub culls. “I will never forget these pictures, the screams of pain...they have given me the strength to sacrifice my whole life to defend that of the animals,” she said.

But while her campaigning earned Brigitte

Brigitte in a famous picture from 1960

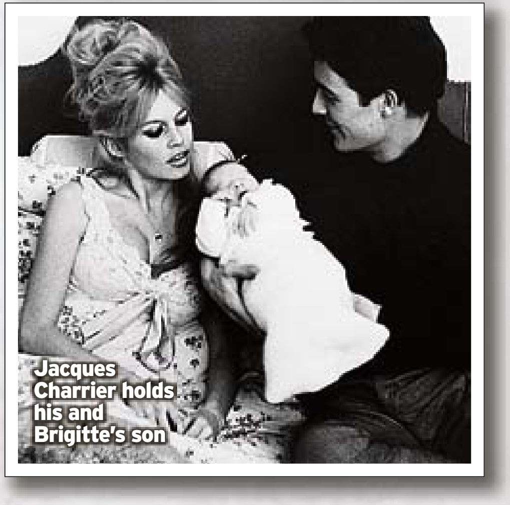
With Roger Vadim, by then her ex-husband, in 1972

Starring in 1965 flim Viva Maria! with Jeanne Moreau

Brigitte and third husband Gunter Sachs in 1966

Leading animal rights protest in 1995

VEAL CRATES
STOP
STOP long-distance live animal transport



Jacques Charrier holds his and Brigitte's son

With rescued puppy in 2005

'Brigitte Bardot embodied a life of freedom... she touched us. We mourn a legend of the century'

admiration from supporters, her public life grew increasingly controversial. After her fourth marriage to Bernard d'Ormale, an adviser to far-Right politician Jean-Marie Le Pen, Brigitte grew fond of making inflammatory remarks, in particular against Muslims and immigrants.

In her 2003 book A Cry in the Silence, she warned against the "Islamisation of France" and a "dangerous, uncontrolled infiltration".

In the 2012 and 2017 presidential elections, she publicly supported Le Pen, who called her the "Joan of Arc of the 21st century".

During the Harvey Weinstein scandal that unravelled in 2017, she again swam against the tide, hitting back at the #MeToo campaign which denounced the abuse of women. "The vast majority are being hypocritical and ridiculous," she told Paris Match in 2018, referring to the actresses who had come forward.

"Lots of actresses try to play the tease with producers to get a role. And then, so we will talk about them, they say they were harassed.

"I found it charming when men told me I was beautiful or had a nice little backside."

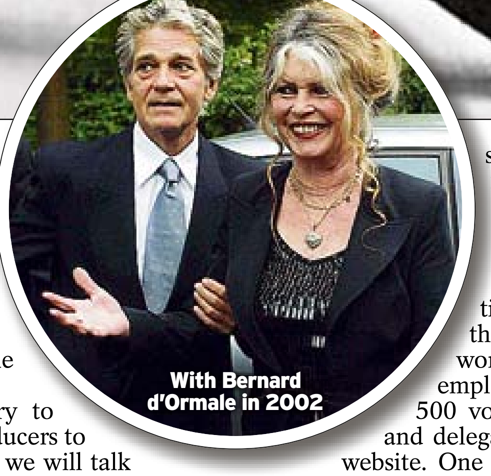
In 2022, a court fined her £35,000 after she described people from Reunion, a French territory, as "degenerates" with "savage genes".

Brigitte's foundation now has more than 70,000 donors worldwide, nearly 300 employees and more than 500 volunteer investigators and delegates, according to its website. One of Brigitte's notable successes came in 2001 when she signed a deal with the mayor of Bucharest, Romania, to save 100,000 stray dogs from death.

She had been ill in hospital in Toulon, according to local media. French President Emmanuel Macron said: "Her films, her voice, her dazzling glory, her initials, her sorrows, her generous passion for animals... Brigitte Bardot embodied a life of freedom.

"A French existence, universal brilliance. She touched us. We mourn a legend of the century."

France's oldest animal protection association, The Société Protectrice des Animaux, said yesterday: "Since the 1970s, she has devoted her life to defending those who have no voice. Her unwavering commitment has helped raise awareness and achieve major advances for animal protection."



With Bernard d'Ormale in 2002

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STARS WE LOST IN 2025: PAGES 22&23

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Staff have suffered stress and anxiety due to threats

Horrific abuse of 999 call handlers

BY **JAMES GAMBLE**

EMERGENCY service call handlers have revealed the "disgusting" verbal abuse and threats they have to contend with.

Horrific audio released by the London Ambulance Service features 111 callers racially abusing staff and issuing chilling death threats.

Recent figures show a shocking 54% of 999 call handlers and 48% of their colleagues have suffered from harassment, threats and verbal abuse in the past year.

Those who experienced abuse also reported that it was repeated, with one in five call handlers facing similar on more than 10 occasions.

A quarter of all control room staff also reported having to endure offensive or inappropriate sexualised comments from the public. In one vile call released by the service, a caller said: "Don't get me mad... If I come there I will kill you."

Emergency call co-ordinator Jude Rodman-Cole said he had even heard hurtful threats against the team's family members.

He added: "I've heard all sorts of disgusting abuse in the past few weeks alone. One member of the team was told, 'I hope your parents die'.

Impact

"Women [call handlers] are told they are 'a jezebel' or 'dumb' and 'stupid' and colleagues with an accent told to 'go back home'.

"We understand that potentially a caller is having the worst day of their life. Our staff are trained to deal with that. But some of what we have to deal with is completely unacceptable.

"We see sickness due to stress and anxiety and abusive calls are definitely a big cause of that. It's so frustrating, we are just trying to help people. It affects our ability to help the rest of London."

Lykeisha Brown-Flynn, a 111 health adviser based at Croydon, South East London, said she regularly experienced racial abuse – especially when directing callers to other health services if they do not need an ambulance. She said: "It made me sad that I was trying to help someone who could speak to me in such a derogatory way."

The LAS released the audio of abusive calls and footage of paramedics suffering abuse as part of its All we want for Christmas is...Respect campaign.

Laurence Cowderoy, deputy director of 999 operations, said: "While we know the vast majority of callers are respectful, we urge everyone to think of the impact of their words."

Matthew Upham is missing

Kate Bush's tribute to her tragic friennd

BY **BENEDICT TETZLAFF**

SINGER Kate Bush has paid tribute to a friend who went missing during a Christmas Day swim.

Antiques dealer Matthew Upham, 63, got into trouble off a beach in Budleigh Salterton, Devon.

Bush, who knew Mr Upham for 30 years, said: "Matthew was one of my very dearest friends. He was extraordinarily kind, thoughtful and lived life to the full. Matthew was a very strong swimmer. He understood that the sea should be respected.

"It's so tragic he lost his life this way."

It was reported yesterday that Mr Upham had been trying to save a woman in difficulty.

Another man, in his 40s, is also missing.

'Wintry hazards' alert

Cold weather warning for the New Year

BY **GEORGIA BATES**

BRITS will see in the New Year with a health warning ringing in their ears as temperatures plummet.

Around 7-8C is expected for the next couple of days but northern parts will see chillier conditions with snow showers from New Year's Day. Met Office forecaster Dan Stroud said 2026 will bring "something a little bit more showery with more wintry hazards".

The North East and North West of England have an amber cold alert from 8pm on Sunday to noon on Monday.

Temperatures may slide to around 3-5C.

The UK Health Security Agency expects a "rise in deaths" among over 65s and those with some health conditions.

Host Claudia returns to the castle on New Year's Day

'New Traitors has moments that made me gasp...I love it'

Host Claudia says fourth series is most twisted yet

BY **NICOLA METHVEN**

CLAUDIA Winkleman has hinted at some devious twists in the "brutal" fourth series of The Traitors that begins on Thursday.

Things are changing right from the start, with all 22 contestants making it in to the castle unscathed in the opening episode.

Executive producers Mike Cotton and Sarah Fay have inserted some "brutal and brilliant" fresh elements.

Host Claudia says: "What happens in this series is truly extraordinary with moments that made me gasp. I can't wait for people to see it.

"The people in charge always have excellent ways of changing the game.

"You think you know how to win – turns out you don't. It gets pretty twisted. I love it."

Mike, from production company Studio Lambert, adds: "We never change the core game but we always play with the twists around it. This season we test our Traitors harder than ever. Also the Faithful – it becomes quite brutal."

For Claudia, 53, the latest series feels different from the previous three.

Brutal

She says: "The castle has many secrets, that's all I can say. At one point all the hairs were standing on end. You think 'I've seen this and it's going to go down this route' – it absolutely doesn't.

"I love this gang because they play with their entire hearts – it gets really, really brutal.

"The celebrity one, they were adorable but they were like, at the round table, 'No, no, after you'. That's not how this one goes."

Some of the twists will come to light quickly while others will emerge later.

One potential is having people related to each other, like mother and son Diane and Ross from series two.

Claudia said: "I think it would be lovely to have someone you know in there with you. But it doesn't always help."

The presenter, who has just left Strictly, was blown away by the success of The Celebrity Traitors, won by Alan Carr, which pulled in audiences of 15 million.

She reveals darker strategies may be in play this time, adding: "I didn't mean the celebs were soft in a bad way but these players play it rather differently and it gets hardcore. It gets very heated. We get some very juicy roundtables."

● *The Traitors, BBC One, New Year's Day, 8pm.*

Celebrating Alan Carr's Celebrity Traitors victory

Alan with fellow Traitors Jonathan Ross and Cat Burns

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Care watchdog needs to finally grow some teeth

FOR years the misery of life inside care homes for tens of thousands of often very vulnerable people has been ignored.

In part because of our collective failure to understand the complex nature of social care but also because of a shameful inability to get to grips with much-needed reform.

The upshot is we have a hugely variable system in which there are a great many providers but many who operate like it is the Wild West. In the middle is a regulator whose purpose is to drive up standards but has been labelled "not fit for purpose".

It hardly inspires confidence, does it?

If the Care Quality Commission has any hope of rebuilding shattered trust it must listen to those who continue to shine a light on what happens inside these institutions.

Care Rights UK, staffed by dedicated volunteers whose loved ones have been on the receiving end of poor care, has done terrific work exposing appalling examples of neglect that shame this country.

There are millions of families, many paying a small fortune, who feel ignored and failed by the CQC when they need and deserve a regulator with teeth and clout.

What they want is a promise that concerns will be acted upon swiftly and, crucially, there will be accountability for poor care.

It is why we should pay the utmost attention when the charity says it has "significant concerns" that years might pass before some homes are routinely inspected.

The CQC has promised "better regulation, better care" but talk is cheap and it is now drinking in the last chance saloon.

Before he quit, the care quango's own boss, Sir Julian Hartley, admitted it was failing families by not providing them with up to date and reliable information. If that is not its raison d'etre, we don't know what is.

Hail NHS donor heroes

THE words of NHS "super-donor" Dr Christopher Black really do encapsulate the best of Britain.

The anaesthetist made his first blood donation when he was a medical student and describes his regular deposits as "life-changing and life-saving".

He is one of a handful of selfless people who regularly give the gift of life by donating blood, plasma, platelets and stem cells. He is also on the NHS Organ Donor Register.

One of the great privileges of living in the UK is that we have a health service there when we need it. It is not perfect, but it continues to embody the very best of us.

It owes a huge debt of gratitude to people like Dr Black who, when not saving people's lives during the day, gives up his time to donate blood to ensure there is a supply when needed.

If only we all adopted the same altruistic attitude the world would be a better place.

Au revoir, Brigitte

FAREWELL to French screen siren Brigitte Bardot who has died at the age of 91. The big-screen sex symbol rocked the world of cinema but once mused: "I started out as a lousy actress…and I have remained one."

She later reinvented herself as an activist.

It was a colourful life lived to the full. And as she would doubtless agree: Je ne regrette rien.

Digital ID leads way in eroding freedom to sinister degree

Big Brother is coming for us, as depicted in George Orwell's dystopian novel 1984

Duncan Barkes

Guest columnist

THIS Labour government seems hellbent on rewiring the UK in such a way that it'll soon be unrecognisable. Announcements for compulsory digital ID, an increased use of facial-recognition technology, cancelled elections and the slashing of trials by jury will leave Britons poorer when it comes to privacy, democracy and justice.

The sum of all these changes will be a country where ministers, should they wish, have the tools at its disposal to govern in the most authoritarian of ways.

As with all politicians who end up in power and are desperate to cling on for as long as they can, changes are sugar-coated to suggest they are being introduced for the good of the UK and to benefit us all.

But stitch them together, and we end up with a bleak and frightening picture where the rights and liberties of the individual are seriously eroded.

Keir Starmer's announcement of digital IDs was initially outlined as a way of tackling illegal migration and to ensure that those who should not be in this country would be unable to work. However, various Labour ministers and MPs soon went off script to suggest that it could also be used to access public and financial services.

You do not have to take too many more steps before you can see how digital ID could be used as a tool of suppression by any government.

IF you think I am dangerously close to becoming a nutjob conspiracy theorist sitting under a table and wearing a tinfoil hat, just remember it was only five years ago that our rights and freedoms were seriously curtailed during the Covid pandemic.

In a world of digital ID, it would be perfectly feasible to stop people going somewhere if their online records revealed that they had refused to have a jab or they had defied the government's instructions.

Aside from the concerns of the possible abuses of power, there is also the ever-present threat of personal data being hacked, which further puts the individual at risk.

The last 12 months have been littered with headlines involving countries, companies and organisations that have been hacked and their data accessed or held to ransom.

Police in various parts of the country are increasing their use of facial-recognition technology, which effectively turns everyone into a suspect.

This menacing form of technology creates a "faceprint" of everyone that walks past a camera and scans it accordingly.

New facial recognition vans have been deployed in Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, Bedfordshire, Surrey, Sussex, Thames Valley and Hampshire with more to follow. Supporters say it is a useful tool in catching those wanted by the authorities who may have avoided apprehension or detection to date.

Regardless of this argument, the fact remains that a digital record is created by anyone caught in the scope of a facial recognition camera with no guarantees that this sensitive data will not be abused in the future. The announcement that new mayoral elections in 2026 are to be cancelled and not held for a further TWO years shows utter contempt for democracy.

Millions of voters across the areas of Greater Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk, Sussex and Brighton and Hampshire and the Solent, have now been disenfranchised. Elections are only ever cancelled during times of national emergency, such as a country at war, for example.

The government says the cancellation is due to it needing more time for local government reorganisation as part of its devolution agenda, though cynics rightly point out that Labour looked set to lose all the elections it has just cancelled and has acted within its own political self-interest.

CANCELLING elections in Great Britain – home of the "Mother of Parliaments" and a form of democratic governance followed by nations around the world – is a bitter blow to democracy and sets an unsavoury precedent.

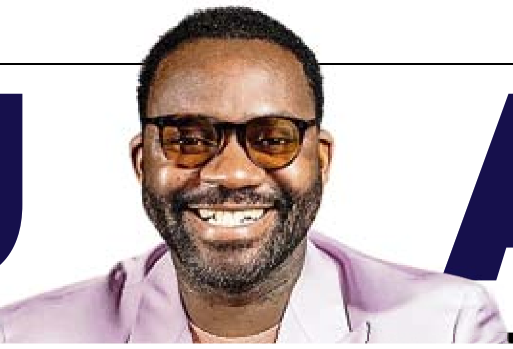
Justice Secretary David Lammy's announcement that those facing jail terms under three years including theft, fraud, burglary and some sex crimes will lose the 800-year-old right to be tried by 12 peers strips away a fundamental right when it comes to British justice.

Lammy says that the new proposals would help reduce a courts backlog, but removing juries and giving greater powers to judges is fraught with danger – especially when there are judges who behave more like activists than impartial arbitrators of the law.

Put together, these changes feel both seismic and sinister. We must take a stand and oppose them at every level.

'There is also the threat of our personal data being hacked'

JJ Anisiobi



THIS IS HOW I SEE IT

Real victim is not the trans rapist

THERE is a grim lack of perspective in the complaints coming from rapist Lexi Secker.

Secker, previously Alex, was found guilty of raping a female friend, a crime that altered another person's life.

Only after being convicted did Secker, *pictured inset below*, declare a transgender identity and demand transfer to a women's prison.

That request was rejected, and rightly so. Prison is not meant to be comfortable, affirming or tailored to the self-image of violent offenders. It is meant to be a place of punishment, containment and public protection.

The priority is not the feelings of a convicted rapist, but the safety of others.

Secker now complains of being attacked, of experiencing sexism and misogyny, and of degrading treatment.

None of this is pleasant, but it is also not the central injustice in this story. The central injustice is the rape.

Compassion is not an unlimited resource, and rape exhausts it quickly. When you commit one of the most violating crimes imaginable, you forfeit the right to public sympathy.

Instead of demanding attention for personal discomfort, Secker should spend that energy confronting the harm caused and accepting the consequences.

CHRISTMAS TV has never been better. When I was a kid, we had five channels, and if you were lucky or wealthy you might have had Sky or cable. That was it. You watched what you were given, when you were given it.

Now? We're spoiled for choice. Streaming has turned Christmas viewing into a pick-and-mix of nostalgia, guilty pleasures and box-set brilliance. This year my wife and I are deep into series three of Married at First Sight New Zealand, proof that festive TV doesn't have to be worthy to be wonderful.

Once that's wrapped, it's straight into a full Home Alone marathon. Comfort viewing, on our terms.

Boot out those who 'come here to hate'

AUSTRALIA has done something Britain seems incapable of doing – it acted. No dithering, no endless legal gymnastics, no hand-wringing about hurt feelings. A 43-year-old British national, who had lived in Queensland for nearly two decades, was arrested earlier this month after allegedly posting Nazi swastikas online, promoting pro-Nazi ideology and calling for violence against the Jewish community.

He was placed in immigration detention in Brisbane and is due in court in January.

And then came the line that would cause a minor nervous breakdown in Whitehall. Australian home affairs minister Tony Burke said, plainly and unapologetically: "He came here to hate – he doesn't get to stay."

That's it. That's the policy. Break the rules, threaten the fabric of society, glorify genocidal ideology, and you're out. No 10-year appeals process.

No activist lawyers clogging the courts. No taxpayer-funded accommodation while the state ties itself in knots.

Why is it that so many countries around the world can remove foreign nationals who break their laws, yet Britain behaves like it has been legally declawed? Why can Australia, Canada and large parts of Europe draw a bright red line, while we pretend ours doesn't exist?

Here in Britain we have men who entered illegally, who commit crimes, who flout court orders and who still cannot be deported. We are told it's "too complicated".

We're told their "rights" trump the rights of British citizens to safety, cohesion and common sense. We are told removal would be "cruel", even as communities absorb the consequences.

Let's be absolutely clear: neo-Nazism is not an opinion. It is an explicitly violent, racist ideology responsible for industrial-scale murder. A foreign national who promotes it, anywhere in the world, should expect zero tolerance. Australia understood that instantly. Britain, maddeningly, still debates it.

In the wake of the Bondi beach atrocity, this is more important than ever. In Australia and the UK.

This isn't about race. It's about rules. It's about sovereignty. It's about whether a country has the confidence to say: if you are not a citizen, and you come here to spread hate or commit crimes, you forfeit the privilege of staying.

And no, I don't want this man back on British streets either.

The answer isn't performative outrage, or importing another security risk. The answer is lawful exclusion, prosecution where appropriate, and firm international co-operation that ensures extremists don't simply bounce from one soft-touch country to another.

Australia showed leadership. Britain should be taking notes – and acting.

DAVID WALLIAMS is in serious trouble, and this time it feels different. Not a social media pile-on, not a passing storm, but the kind of institutional distancing that only happens when doors are quietly closing.

He has now been removed from the line-up for a major children's book event, with Waterstones confirming he will no longer appear at its Children's Book Festival.

That follows his being dropped by his publisher HarperCollins UK after allegations of inappropriate behaviour towards women, which he strongly denies.

I've never met David Walliams myself. I've never worked with him, never shared a room, never crossed paths. But, like many people in media and television, I've heard stories. There were always stories. Always a sense that his behaviour off camera didn't quite match the carefully constructed public image.

None of this is a verdict. Allegations are not convictions, and Walliams is entitled to a just legal process to determine the facts. But experience tells us that, when the first brick comes loose, the wall often follows.

For someone whose brand was built on whimsy, warmth and children's laughter, this fall is stark.

The question now isn't just what Walliams will say next, it's about who else speaks – and what they have to say.

AS A supporter of Donald Trump, I still think the move to add his name to the Kennedy Center is petty and unnecessary. Trump is a builder by instinct.

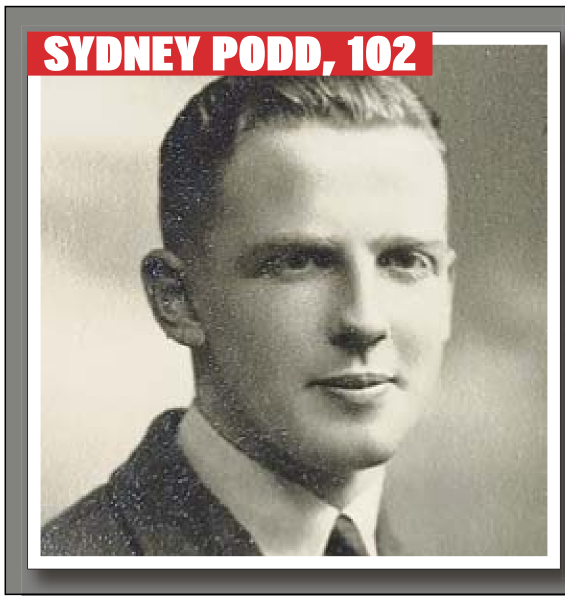
If he wanted a legacy arts venue, he could have commissioned something entirely new – a vast, gleaming cultural centre in another city, bold, unmistakable and unapologetically Trump. That would have been visionary.

Instead, choosing to co-habit a building already named after John F Kennedy – one of America's most beloved presidents – feels small.

It invites comparison rather than distinction. It also opens a ridiculous precedent.

What happens when the next president comes along? Do we keep bolting names on to the facade? Legacy should feel earned, not forced. And if this is the direction of travel, one has to ask: what next, a Trump likeness on Mount Rushmore?

DAILY EXPRESSO SEE HOST JJ ANISIOBI AND GUESTS IN NEW EPISODES MONDAY TO FRIDAY ON THE EXPRESS YOUTUBE CHANNEL



SYDNEY PODD, 102

Farewell to our D-Day heroes

Sydney Podd served in a fleet of Halifax bombers

Deaths of Doug and Syd

BY **GILES SHELDRICK**
Chief Reporter

THE deaths of two D-Day heroes who each played a crucial role in the 1944 invasion of Normandy were announced yesterday.

RAF gunner Sydney Podd, who died aged 102, served in a fleet of Halifax bombers towing Horsa gliders during the opening exchanges of the Second World War allied assault.

Doug Baldwin, who died at 100, served as a Bren gunner with the 6th Battalion King's Own Scottish Borderers, and survived detention in Nazi prisoner of war camps.

Proud

Sydney from Ipswich, Suffolk, who was part of 644 Squadron, once said of D-Day: "I'll always remember it. I was proud to serve my country. It didn't seem like, at the time, we were doing a great thing, but you realise more what you've done years later."

Doug of Caddington, Beds, was just 18 years old when he landed on the beaches of northern France.

He was later captured and made to mine for coal during nine months in multiple German PoW camps.

The veteran regularly returned to Normandy with friends in pilgrimages organised by the Taxi Charity for Military Veterans, which he said had given him "a new lease of life".

Earlier this year he helped the Express win a stunning victory by forcing the government into pledging to pay all costs associated with veterans returning to European battlefields to commemorate fallen friends.

The two Normandy giants' deaths came in the year that Britain marked the 80th anniversaries of Victory in Europe and Victory over Japan days.

Next year will be the 82nd anniversary of D-Day, with only a handful of survivors expected to be well enough to attend commemorations in France.

The Royal British Legion estimates just 8,000 British Second World War veterans remain alive.

Dick Goodwin, of the Taxi Charity, paid tribute, saying: "Doug was a gently spoken and very kind man with a very warm smile. Everyone will miss him terribly.

"Even after all these years we are still meeting remarkable men and women who served in the Second World War who would love the chance to travel with us for acts of remembrance."

DOUG BALDWIN, 100

Doug, who was just 18 when he landed in Normandy, was later held by the Nazis

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TESCO
Every little helps

Charles and Sophie look fresh-faced at church on Sunday

Normal service resumes for the royals

BY **JASMINE CAREY**

THE King blew away the Christmas cobwebs with a walk to church on Sunday.

Charles, 77, did not have far to go – St Mary Magdalene is on the Sandringham estate, where the royals enjoyed their festivities.

He was accompanied by Edward and Sophie, the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh. Princess Anne and her husband Vice Admiral Sir Tim Laurence also attended but Queen Camilla did not.

Charles looked happy and relaxed as he arrived to greetings from well-wishers and the Rev Canon Dr Paul Williams.

The royals all wore coats in shades of brown, other than Sir Tim in black. The family, including William, Kate and their three children George, Charlotte and Louis, also attended the Norfolk church on Christmas Day, when members of the public queued from 9pm on Christmas Eve for a glimpse.

Charles, whose Christmas Day message was the most watched broadcast of the day, is expected to stay at Sandringham for the rest of the festive break.

He will return to royal engagements after revealing his cancer treatment is being reduced in the new year.

‘Gutted’ over Wales’ home security zone

BY **JASMINE CAREY**

THE Prince and Princess of Wales’ home in Windsor has caused controversy among dog walkers over new security cordons.

William and Catherine moved into Royal Lodge in Windsor Great Park with their three children last month and plan to remain there.

As part of the new arrangement, a security zone was put in place around the Crown Estate property.

This includes a six-mile cordon, additional fencing and numerous CCTV cameras.

The area was also made an exclusion zone by the Home Office under an amendment order to the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005.

While this is deemed necessary for the safety of the royals, it has angered dog walkers who claim the new secure perimeter means they can no longer access land that they have enjoyed for years.

People say they feel “absolutely gutted” about the effect of the changes since the Waleses settled into the Georgian mansion.

One dog walker told a newspaper: “They say you can use other gates but you can’t because there’s nowhere to park.

“We’ve lived here for 20 years, it’s lovely in there. We appreciate they need privacy, but it’s a real shame. We are absolutely gutted.”

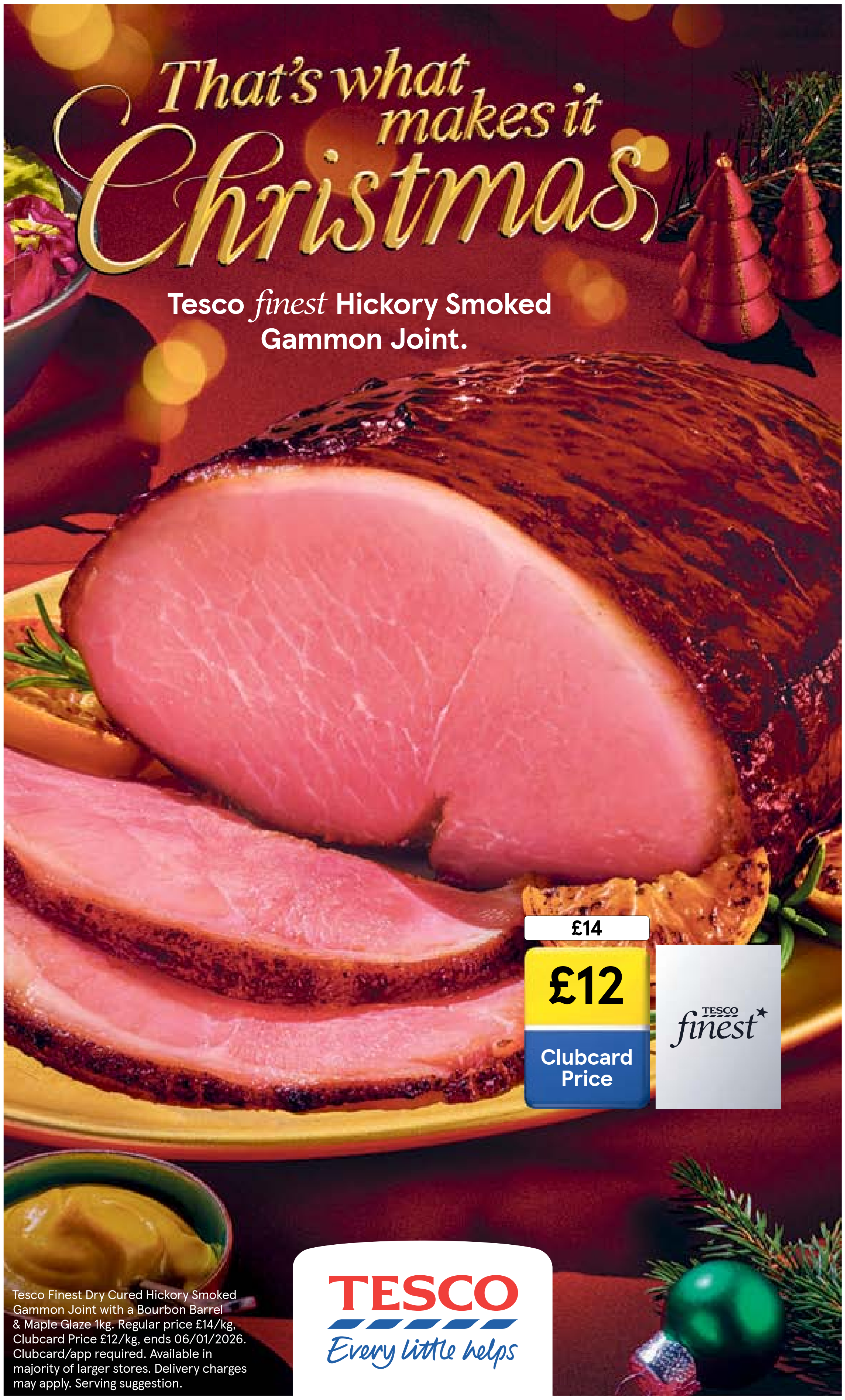
Another person reportedly said: “It’s a blow but they aren’t going to change their minds.”

Residents living within a mile of Windsor Great Park can reportedly pay a £60 fee for access to parts of the land unavailable to other visitors. However, it is believed that this does not make a major difference as a result of some key areas now being inaccessible.

Kensington Palace, which William and Catherine use as their London base, was contacted for comment.

Recent move for Catherine and William

EXPRESS EXTRA
Scan here to get the best royal stories on WhatsApp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‘Antibiotic-resistant infection ate my face after crash’

BY **FILIPA GASPAR**

A CAR crash survivor has told how an implant which was part of her post-injury facial reconstruction became infected and started eating her face.

Vanessa Carter, 47, suffered life-changing injuries in a serious car accident as a passenger in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2004 – including a broken jaw and nose, smashed cheekbones and the loss of an eye.

Her face was reconstructed and an artificial eye was made for her.

She had several operations to remove tissue from damaged and infected areas and was given heavy doses of antibiotics.

A prosthetic implant was placed to bridge a gap between her cheekbone and nose, but soon she noticed pus leaking from the area.

Dangerous

Vanessa from Torbay, Devon, had emergency surgery to remove the prosthetic, which was sent away for tests.

Doctors then told her she had developed a dangerous antibiotic-resistant infection, or AMR.

She said: “When the results arrived, the first thing I saw was the acronym MRSA. I learned it meant methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus – a dangerous antibiotic-resistant infection.

“By this time, the right side of my face had collapsed completely, and I couldn’t even keep an artificial eye in place.

“I was put on a stronger, last-resort antibiotic called vancomycin and told that we couldn’t attempt any reconstructive surgery for at least a year – not until the infection was fully gone.

“Even then, my doctors didn’t sound hopeful because the damage was severe and I was now considered high-risk for infection.” For three years Vanessa battled MRSA and antibiotic resistance, then sought guidance from a world-renowned transplant surgeon who provided her with a treatment plan.

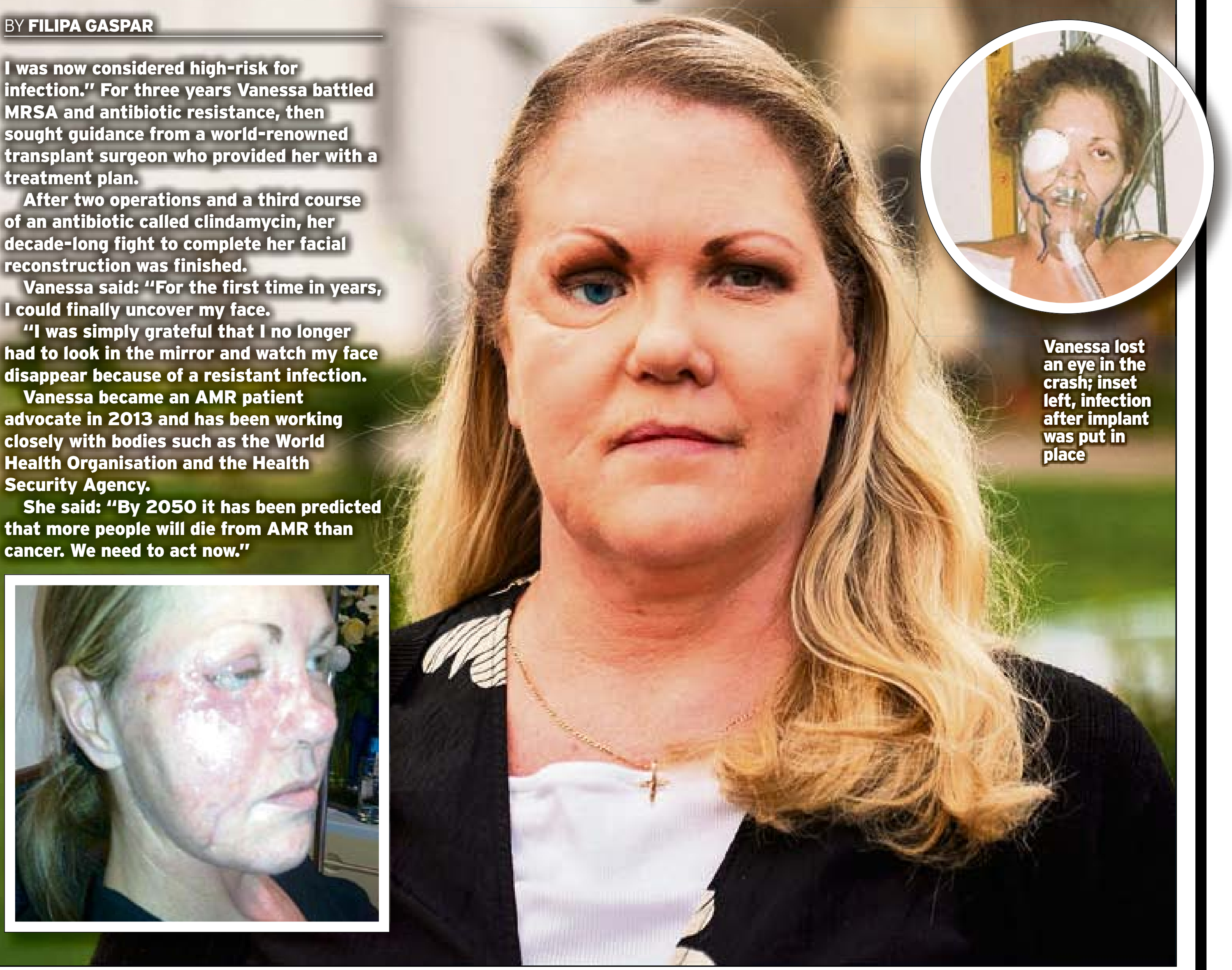
After two operations and a third course of an antibiotic called clindamycin, her decade-long fight to complete her facial reconstruction was finished.

Vanessa said: “For the first time in years, I could finally uncover my face.

“I was simply grateful that I no longer had to look in the mirror and watch my face disappear because of a resistant infection.

Vanessa became an AMR patient advocate in 2013 and has been working closely with bodies such as the World Health Organisation and the Health Security Agency.

She said: “By 2050 it has been predicted that more people will die from AMR than cancer. We need to act now.”



Vanessa lost an eye in the crash; inset left, infection after implant was put in place

Pride of 10 superstars dedicated to donating

BY **ELLA PICKOVER**

AN elite group of 10 “super donors” have been praised for their dedication to helping others.

The team, aged between 31 and 64, have donated blood, plasma, platelets and stem cells through NHS Blood and Transplant over the past 20 years.

They are all also on the NHS organ donor register.

The components are used to help treat a variety of injuries and illnesses, including life-threatening accidents and cancers.

Reaction

NHSBT was established in October 2005 when the National Blood Authority, UK Transplant and Bio Products Laboratory merged to create one organisation.

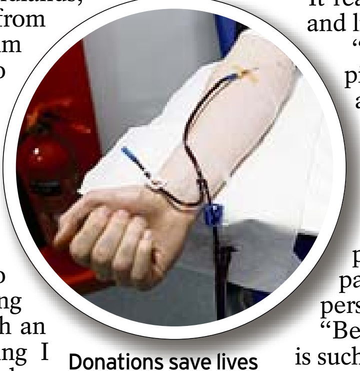
Since then, just 10 people have donated every blood component and stem cells.

They are: Adam Murchington, 61, from Birmingham; Andrew Bruce, 58, from County Durham; Andy Stowe, 64, from Birmingham; Anthony Robson, 33, from County Durham; Christopher Black, 31, from Leicester; Henry Care, 33, from Manchester; James Allen, 44, from London; Robert Clay, 64, from Solihull, West Midlands; Stuart Reader, 62, from Essex, and Tim Sargeant, 58, also from Essex.

Mr Stowe started donating blood as a teenager, then gave stem cells in 2013.

Now he donates plasma every two weeks. He said: “Being able to donate is such an honour. It’s something I have always loved to do.

“I’m incredibly proud to have been a donor of all types and will continue to donate as long as I can and whatever is needed.”



Donations save lives every day, say medics

Dr Black, 31, made his first donation when he was a medical student.

He said: “At work, I see the reality of how blood can bring people back to life and the reaction of family members when they hear their loved one is going to be OK.

“It really is life-changing and life-saving.

“The fact that I can pick up the phone, ask for blood and have it delivered right away can only happen through the work of hundreds of people and one particularly special person – the donor.

“Being able to donate is such an honour.

“Donating stem cells was particularly incredible. I felt so lucky to be found as a match, not many people get that privilege.”

Mr Bruce added: “I’ve always been the kind of person who is keen to help. It’s partly why I joined the fire service.

“So going to give blood seemed like the right thing to do.

“It’s an easy thing to do and I would encourage everyone who can to come along and donate too.”

Mark Chambers, director of donor experience at NHSBT, said: “It’s a very rare thing for somebody to have directly donated every blood component. And the fact that these 10 men have truly shows their dedication to helping as many people as they can, in as many different ways as they can.

Treatment

“To donate solely with the desire to help others shows a real altruistic nature and we cannot thank every donor enough for all they do to help the many people who need treatment from blood, plasma, platelets or stem cells.

“Their donations are improving and saving lives every day.”

OPINION: PAGE 12

AI tool set to help cut A&E waiting lists

BY **STORM NEWTON**

HOSPITALS are using artificial intelligence to help cut waiting times in emergency departments this winter.

The A&E forecasting tool pinpoints when demand will be high, allowing trusts to better plan for shifts and extra bed space.

Officials said the technology allows staff “to do the things that they’re trained to do, rather than having to be bound down by bureaucratic processes”.

The forecasting tool is trained on historical data, including weather trends, to determine how many people are likely to visit A&E.

Ian Murray, minister for digital government, said: “It helps us to pretend how busy A&E departments are going to be. You can then put your resources in the right place. You can maybe see about freeing up beds.”

Life-saving medic stung with £50 parking fine

BY **JAN DISLEY**

A SURGEON who was given a parking fine as he fought to save a woman's life has been told to provide proof of his good deed or pay up.

Dr Nick Lagattolla was returning to his car after visiting a bank when he saw the casualty having a cardiac arrest in the street.

He took her indoors and gave her treatment for three hours which "essentially saved her life".

But he later received the £50 penalty and after appealing, was told by the local council that he must provide evidence that he tended to the woman before it can be cancelled.

Dr Lagattolla, a consultant general, vascular and endocrine surgeon with 40 years' experience based at The Winterbourne Hospital in Dorchester, accused Dorset council of displaying a "lack of goodwill". The fine was issued after his September 15 visit to the town centre.

Dr Lagattolla said: "As I was coming out of the bank and heading back to my car a lady had collapsed on South Street and I ended up spending three hours with her and essentially saved her life. We brought her into the bank and rescued her and saved her. I got back into my car and then went home.

"I received an email to say my ticket was invalid and I have been told to pay a £25 fine, which will rise to £50. I thought, okay, I'll just tell them the story and it will be okay, so I emailed and got in touch with them and they basically responded saying that we don't believe you.

"I always buy a ticket and frankly it's annoying that I'm still being charged, despite helping a woman after suffering a cardiac event.

"The fact that it's come at this time of year is pretty unseasonal from Dorset council and delayed considering it took place months ago, I thought they dropped the matter after explaining it to them. It strikes me that the council are being inconsiderate and inappropriate and it feels like there is no goodwill from them, given these rather unique circumstances."

Dorset council said it requested proof to ensure "fairness, transparency and compliance".

A spokesperson said: "In line with our standard process, we've requested documentary proof directly from the individual.

"We always include details on how to make payment, and we require supporting evidence for all appeals because this is a legal process.

"Clear documentation is essential to ensure fairness, transparency, and compliance."

'They basically responded saying we don't believe you'

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Riverside home in Bray, Berks, looks to be in poor condition

Disgraced star Harris's house in a sorry state

BY **JAN DISLEY**

THE former riverside home of disgraced TV star Rolf Harris looks to have fallen into disrepair since his death at the property more than two years ago.

The mansion, in the village of Bray, Berkshire, went on the market for £4million in April but reportedly still remains unsold with no offers.

Today, its walls appear to be decaying, its roof is covered in moss, the gates are damaged and the artist's studio on the riverbank is said to have become damp. One property expert suggested potential buyers are put off by the asking price and reputation of its former owner.

Convicted paedophile Harris, *inset*, was jailed for five years in 2014. Released on parole in 2017, the former TV cartoonist died in May 2023 at the age of 93.

Habitats are suffering in wild weather

BY **EMILY BEAMENT**

THE extreme weather seen in 2025 is putting "untold strain" on wildlife habitats and nature, a report warns.

Britain has endured drought, heat, wildfires, downpours and floods over the year, which have caused havoc in the natural world.

The National Trust's annual review of the year for nature warned that extreme weather has become the "new normal".

Ben McCarthy, head of nature conservation at the National Trust, said: "In just two years, we've lurched from a very wet period to record-breaking heat and dryness that put our countryside on red alert.

"Extremes in weather are nothing new, but it's the compounded impact of several drought years in a short period which is putting untold strain on habitats and making life even more difficult for wildlife.

"These are alarm signals we cannot ignore, and we need to work faster, smarter and in a more joined-up way."

Nearly one earthquake a day in 2025

BY **LUCINDA CAMERON**

A TOTAL of 309 earthquakes have been recorded in the UK this year, latest data shows.

The most active regions included Perthshire and the Western Highlands of Scotland, southern parts of Wales, and the Yorkshire and Lancashire areas of England, the British Geological Survey figures show.

The two largest onshore quakes were hours apart on October 20 near Loch Lyon in Perthshire and Kinross, when a 3.7-magnitude tremor was followed by one of magnitude 3.6.

BGS received 198 "felt reports" afterwards, some more than 35 miles from the epicentre.

Brian Baptie, of BGS, said: "Small earthquakes happen all the time and it remains of critical importance that they are studied to help us understand the possible impact of the rare large earthquakes."

Seismic activity is recorded by a network of 80 monitoring stations around the UK which are operated by BGS.

NHS Trust wanted to inflict even more pain on me just to save a few quid

Sarah Anstiss had vital infusions of Lidocaine restored

Despair for other patients amid U-turn after Express steps in

EXCLUSIVE

BY **CHRIS RICHES**

A MUM who has endured 30 years of crippling pain has blasted her NHS Trust after they stopped providing the one drug that helps – until the Daily Express intervened.

Former teacher Sarah Anstiss, 50, said the NHS almost condemned her and others at her pain clinic to misery to save a few pennies.

Since the age of 17, she has suffered excruciating discomfort and after decades of scans and tests, doctors diagnosed the rare double conditions of fibromyalgia and postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome.

Medics found the one pain-reducing drug that enables her to get out of her wheelchair and enjoy a semblance of a normal life – a four-monthly intravenous infusion of lidocaine.

Thrilled

But Sarah's husband Graham, 52, revealed how on October 23 NHS chiefs told her and other patients at her pain clinic that they were stopping the less than £1,000-a-go life-changing infusions – to save cash.

The Express has seen the letter she was given that day confirming she was being "discharged" from the pain clinic that gave her the infusions and back to her GP's care and could only be "re-referred as appropriate".

But within two days of the Express contacting the Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust on Sarah's behalf last week, she received a message to confirm a U-turn.

And she has been scheduled for a new lidocaine treatment on February 19. Mum-of-two Sarah said: "I'm thrilled at the news because I knew come the end of January the last infusion would be out of my system and I didn't know what was happening next. It was really quite frightening.

"At my worst before lidocaine I didn't want to be alive.

"I have considered taking my life on several occasions. But I wouldn't do that, because it would be selfish to my children and husband.

"I was weighing up, 'how long can I continue with this pain?'

"But I would never want to put my kids through what I went through when I lost my dad to a heart attack in his 50s, so you have to stay strong."

Although they are thankful, Sarah and Graham worry that others at the pain clinic may not benefit from the same change of heart by the NHS. Graham said: "I want everyone crippled by long-term pain locally to get it.

"There'll be people out there that could kill themselves because of the original decision. When you live in constant, agonising pain – literally curled up in a little ball crying your eyes out – that's where they will be back to without this infusion. At the clinic, there were patients crying at the news of the infusions ending.

"One sight upset me – a lady who needed walking sticks had to get a cab to hospital which used up her benefits.

"Now what is she going to do in the new year? She could now end up trapped in her house on her own.

"The doctors have been great and seemed as angry and upset as we were, but they said it was a cost-cutting decision and out of their hands."

With her husband and childhood love Graham

POTS and fibromyalgia are conditions that commonly co-occur and are associated with nervous system dysfunction.

Intravenous lidocaine has been shown to be an effective and safe treatment for fibromyalgia. POTS, which can cause seizures, is sparked by the body being overwhelmed with pain from the fibromyalgia and then shutting down.

Lidocaine works by reducing the patient's increased sensitivity to pain.

It costs between £550 to £1,500 by ordering privately online, with some of that covering the two-hour staff fees for giving the drug intravenously. But as a bulk buyer the NHS should have been able to have sourced its infusions more cheaply.

In the US, patients are advised to have infusions every three months but Sarah's were every four. It meant the effectiveness would tail off and pain returned before the next one.

Sarah, from Uxbridge, west London, initially dismissed the first ravages of pain in her late teens as being down to her early years of ballroom dancing.

It was not until post-lockdown that a consultant suggested intravenous infusions of lidocaine, being trialled in the US. Since then Sarah, mum to Bethany, 26, and Michael, 19, has had six rounds, one every four months.

Graham said: "I contacted the PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service) team at Hillingdon Hospital and said 'this is completely unacceptable, you can't just take someone from a medicine that's working, to nothing.'"

Unacceptable

The Express contacted Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust on December 17 to explain Sarah's face-to-face meeting with her pain consultant who reluctantly told her and other patients their lidocaine was being stopped. But the following day the trust rang Sarah to say she should soon, or already have, confirmation of a new lidocaine infusion for next year.

The trust has so far not given the Express any official statement on Sarah being discharged and her subsequent readmittance to the pain clinic.

● If you were told by Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust last October your lidocaine was being stopped and have not yet been contacted about new infusions, you can contact chris.riches@reachplc.com

Pothole payout claims soar

BY **NEIL LANCEFIELD**

POTHOLE compensation claims have soared 90% in three years, analysis suggests.

A total of 53,015 claims were submitted to 177 councils in 2024 - up from 27,731 in 2021, RAC research found.

Derbyshire County Council saw the biggest rise in claims in that period, from 224 to 3,307. It was followed by Glasgow City Council, whose annual total went from 1,140 to 2,794, and Oxfordshire County Council, up from 488 claims to 1,941.

The RAC said the total rise was worrying but noted 2024's total was a 6% fall from 56,655 in 2023.

Just 26% of claims made last year resulted in payouts. Payments averaged £390, but the RAC estimated a typical repair bill for a family car with pothole damage beyond a puncture is £590. Councils in Gloucestershire, Worcestershire, Medway, Carmarthenshire and Telford all turned down 99% of claims last year, based on responses by 177 out of 207 councils to the RAC's Freedom of Information requests.

The Department for Transport said: "We're investing £7.3billion over the next four years to help councils resurface roads."

The Local Government Association said pressure on budgets has hit councils' ability to "do as much as they'd like".

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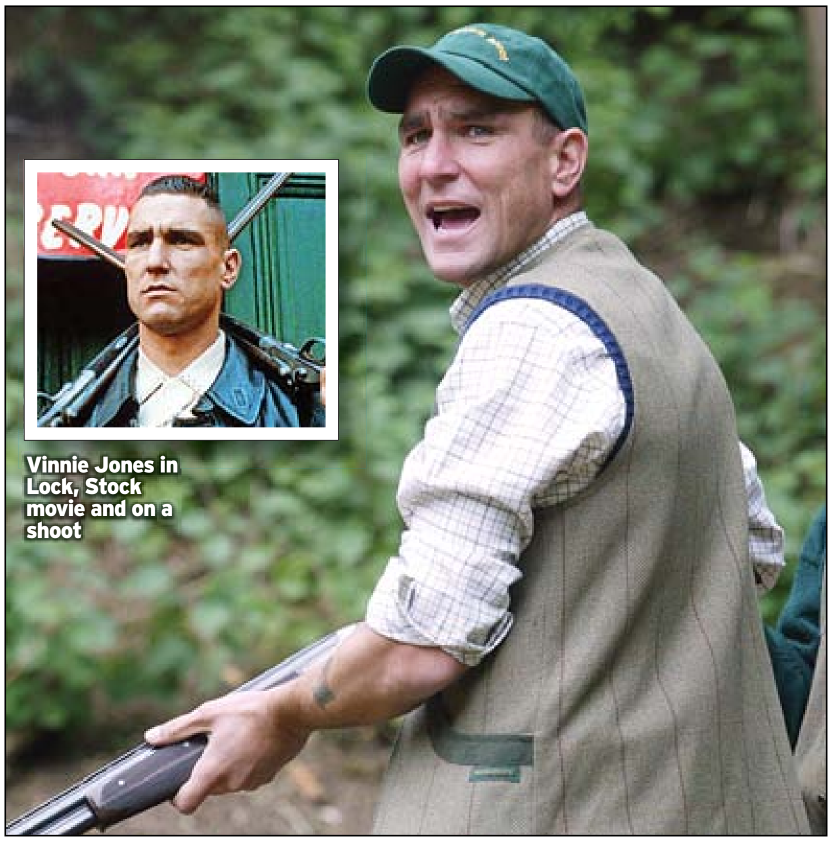
Lock, Stock with shock at Smoking Barrels...



Vinnie Jones in Lock, Stock movie and on a shoot

Vinnie's shooting plan row

BY **BEN BARRY**

VINNIE Jones has caused uproar with plans to build a shooting retreat on his country estate.

The football hard man turned actor wants planning permission for a development that would accommodate country sports.

However, the Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels star, 60, is facing significant opposition.

More than 12,000 have backed a campaign by Protect the Wild, which calls on Chichester District Council to reject the plan for Blackwool Farm in Ebernoe, West Sussex.

Minority

Objectors say it will put further strain on wildlife and argue it would hand over "shared national landscape to a tiny, wealthy minority".

In an open letter to the council and the South Downs National Park Authority, campaigners said: "A development designed to accommodate shooting parties – however it is phrased in planning language – adds further strain to wildlife that should be protected, not exploited.

"National parks belong to the nation. They are places for walking, nature recovery, education, tranquillity, and public access.

"They are not places for commercialised bloodsports or luxury shooting retreats."

The open letter added: "Approving this planning application would hand over part of our shared national landscape to a tiny, wealthy minority at the direct expense of the wildlife the National Park Authority is legally bound to protect."

Under the plans, empty farm buildings would be converted into seven units of private "bespoke accommodation" for countryside "sporting activities", which will include shoots.

The development is situated next to Ebernoe Common, which is managed by the Sussex Wildlife Trust.

One direct objection from a member of the public said National Parks should "exist to protect wildlife, not to play host to shooting tourism".

They added that a "development designed to accommodate shooting parties, added further strain to wildlife that must be protected, not exploited".

Former Wimbledon FC defender Jones has described himself as a "British conservationist" who wants to "protect our way of life for future generations".

A decision will be made by the council at a later date.

David with Beau and his paw print tattoo. Below, doctors Rachel Hall and Chris Hovell

Heartfelt thanks to my hero dog

BY **KATHERINE BALDWIN**

DAVID Howarth's beloved pet dog will always be close to his heart after he saved his life when he had a cardiac arrest.

Labrador Beau raised the alarm when David, 71, collapsed on a beach, and passers-by managed to keep him alive with CPR.

Now David, who made a full recovery, has had a paw print tattooed over his heart as a reminder of Beau's heroic actions.

He said: "I feel I owe Beau my life. I feel like I've won the lottery. I have this feeling of euphoria. I feel extremely high-spirited, upbeat, optimistic and incredibly thankful for Beau and the people who went out of their way to save me.

"I call them my angels. Every day I feel like the bubble will burst but it's a year on and it hasn't. I'm just so glad to have another chance."

Healthcare assistant Claire Dashwood, 65, *right*, was on Sandbanks beach in Poole, Dorset, when she saw Beau running around barking to attract attention after David's collapse. She said: "He was dead, purple and freezing cold. I checked his pulse and his airway but there was nothing."

Claire – along with doctors Rachel Hall and Chris Hovell – gave him CPR for 25 minutes until an ambulance arrived.

The British Heart Foundation says fewer than 10% of people survive an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest.

There'll be no space service on a Sunday

Rocket site to respect Sabbath

BY **CALLUM HOARE**

A NEW spaceport on the Outer Hebrides is set for blast off – except on Sundays to avoid breaking religious traditions.

Spaceport 1 on North Uist has been built to launch rockets carrying satellites into outer space.

But the futuristic vision is at odds with the isles' Sabbatarianism. Many parts continue to honour the Biblical commandment not to work or play on a Sunday.

Chained

Papers relating to Spaceport 1 reveal it has consent to open for extended periods through the week and on Saturdays – but add there will be: "No Sunday working."

One insider explained the ban was introduced to respect the wishes of locals. They said: "The area around the spaceport site is generally very quiet, with not many houses.

"But there is still an elderly population nearby that observe the Sabbath. So as a condition of the project going ahead it was agreed there would be no rocket launches on a Sunday."

North Uist is home to new rocket site

In the past, islanders didn't hang washing outside on the Sabbath and some church-goers chained up children's swings to ensure quiet.

In recent years, however, the tradition has eroded – although not without protest. In November 2024 campaigners gathered at a Tesco in Stornoway when it became the first supermarket to open on Sunday.

Britain's other spaceports include sites in Sutherland in the Highlands.

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VITABIOTICS

STARS WE LOST

From Pope Francis to Gene Hackman, Jilly Cooper to Frederick Forsyth, KAREN ROCKETT remembers the many famous faces we said goodbye to in 2025

Bonkbuster author Jilly Cooper, who was 88, died in October after a fall

JANUARY

Wayne Osmond of family pop group The Osmonds, died on January 1, aged 73. Footballer Brian Usher, the youngest member of Sunderland's first-ever promotion-winning team in 1963-64, died on January 3, aged 80. Drag performer and reality TV star The Vivienne, died on January 3, aged 32. Founder of the far-Right National Front Party Jean-Marie Le Pen, died on January 7, aged 96. Barbara Clegg, actress in Emergency Ward 10 and Doctor Who scriptwriter, died on January 7, aged 98. Actor and comedian Tony Slattery, best known for Channel 4's Whose Line is it Anyway? died on January 14, aged 65. Hollyoaks actor Paul Danan died of a drug overdose on January 15, aged 46. Irish singer Linda Nolan, of The Nolan Sisters, died after a well-publicised battle with breast cancer on January 15, aged 65. US surrealist filmmaker David Lynch, best known for the hit TV series Twin Peaks, died on January 15, aged 78. Actress Dame Joan Plowright, whose career spanned over six decades, died on January 16, aged 95. Legendary Scotland and Manchester United footballer Denis Law died on January 17, aged 84. Sixties icon Marianne Faithfull, singer and former girlfriend of Mick Jagger, died on January 30, aged 78.

FEBRUARY

Man About the House and George and Mildred star Brian Murphy died on February 2, aged 92. Religious leader the Aga Khan died on February 4, aged 88. The death of English dual-code rugby player Brian Scrivens, who played for Newport RFC and Wigan, was announced on February 4, aged 87. Footballer and Notts County manager Mick Walker died on February 7, aged 84. Newcastle, Sheffield United and Coventry City footballer John Tudor died on February 9, aged 78. Footballing midfielder Ronnie Boyce, who made 282 league appearances for West Ham United, died on February 13, aged 82. Legendary actor Gene Hackman died on February 18, aged 95. He was found alongside his wife Betsy Arakawa at their home in New Mexico. Rick Buckler, drummer with The Jam, died on February 17, aged 69. Joe Haines, former Downing Street press secretary and journalist, died on February 19, aged 97. US singer and pianist Roberta Flack, known for her emotive, genre-blending ballads, died on February 24, aged 88. Game for a Laugh and Going for Gold presenter Henry Kelly died on February 25, aged 78. Buffy the Vampire actress Michelle Trachtenberg died on February 26, aged 39. Soviet Chess Grandmaster and 10th World Chess Champion Boris Spassky died on February 27, aged 88. David Johansen, singer with the New York Dolls, died on February 28, aged 75.

MARCH

Scottish artist Jack Vettriano, whose 1992 painting The Singing Butler is one of the best-selling art prints in the UK, died on March 1, aged 73. The death of Spurs, Watford and Charlton midfielder Dennis Bond, 77, was announced on March 3. Carl Dean, the reclusive long-term husband of Dolly Parton died on March 3, aged 82. Fred Stolle, the Australian amateur world No 1 tennis player and commentator, died on March 5, aged 86. Brian James, guitarist and songwriter with punk band The Damned, died on March 6, aged 74. Scottish boxer and Olympic champion of 1956, Dick McTaggart, died on March 9, aged 89. Stedman Pearson of Eighties siblings pop band Five Star, died March 10, aged 60. Diamonds Are Forever actor Bruce Glover died on March 12, aged 92. Boxing champion and businessman George Foreman, famous also for his eponymous grill, died on March 21, aged 76. Radio DJ and Top of the Pops presenter Andy Peebles died on March 22, aged 76. Heart-throb actor Richard Chamberlain, known for Dr Kildare and Father Ralph in The Thorn Birds, died on March 29, aged 90. Dixons founder and Life Peer Stanley Kalms, died on March 30, aged 93. Second World War code-breaker Betty Webb, who worked at Bletchley Park, died on March 31, aged 101.

APRIL

Hollywood actor Val Kilmer, best known for Top Gun and Batman, died on April 1, aged 65, of throat cancer. Policeman Trevor Lock, awarded the George Medal for bravery during the Iranian Embassy siege in London, died on April 1, aged 85. Poetry in Motion singer Johnny Tillotson died on April 1, aged 86. Fashion designer David Sassoon, who created more than 70 outfits for Princess Diana, died on April 9, aged 92. Activist and co-founder of Women Against Pit Closures Anne Harper, the former wife of strike leader Arthur Scargill, died on April 10, aged 83. Mike Berry, singer and actor in Are You Being Served? and Worzel Gummidge, died on April 11, aged 82. Upstairs, Downstairs and The House of Eliott actress Jean Marsh died April 13, aged 90. Northern Irish singer Clodagh Rodgers died on April 18, aged 78. Pope Francis, the first Jesuit and Latin-American pope, died on April 21, aged 88. Coronation Street actor Philip Lowrie, who played Dennis Tanner, died on April 25, aged 88. Mike Peters, Welsh rock singer with The Alarm and songwriter of Sixty Eight Guns died on April 28, aged 66.

Actress Diane Keaton, 79, died in October

MAY

German racing driver Jochen Mass, who won the 24 Hours of Le Mans and the Barcelona Grand Prix in 1975, died May 4, aged 78. Northern Ireland and Aston Villa footballer Peter McParland, hailed for his heroic goal-scoring performances during the 1958 World Cup, died on May 4, aged 91. US actor Joe Don Baker died on May 7, aged 89. Sir Tom Farmer, founder and CEO of Kwik-Fit, died on May 9, aged 84. Footballer Colin Booth, who won two league championship medals with Wolverhampton Wanderers, died on May 11, aged 90. Broadway composer Charles Strouse, who wrote the hit musicals Annie and Bye Bye Birdie, died on May 15, aged 96. Investigative journalist Duncan Campbell died on May 16, aged 80. Author and Private Eye cartoonist Barry Fantoni suffered a fatal heart attack on May 20, aged 85. Daily Express journalist and politician Patrick O'Flynn died of cancer, aged 59. The former UKIP MEP's death was announced on May 20. BBC television executive and presenter Alan Yentob died on May 24, aged 78. Peter David, the comic book writer known for The Incredible Hulk, died on May 24, aged 68. Former chairman of Shell International and British Rail, Sir Bob Reid, died on May 28, aged 91. US TV actress Loretta Swit, known for playing Major Margaret "Hot Lips" Houlihan in M*A*S*H, died on May 30, aged 87.

JUNE

US songwriter and record producer Sly Stone of Sly and the Family Stone fame, died on June 9, aged 82. Esteemed thriller writer and Daily Express columnist Frederick Forsyth, who wrote The Day of the Jackal, died on June 9, aged 86. Beach Boys star Brian Wilson died on June 11, aged 82. TV personality Kim Woodburn who co-presented the show How Clean Is Your House? died on June 16, aged 83. Patrick Walden, guitarist with the rock band Babyshambles, died on June 20, aged 46, after a long battle with heroin addiction. Former Astronomer Royal Sir Francis Graham-Smith died on June 20, aged 102. English cricketer David Lawrence, who played for the national team and Gloucestershire, died on June 21, aged 61. Fred Smith, founder of transportation company FedEx, died on June 21, aged 80. Mick Ralphs, guitarist and singer with the bands Mott the Hoople and Bad Company,

THIS YEAR

Katharine, Duchess of Kent, who was 92, died in September

died on June 23, aged 81. US teen idol, singer and actor Bobby Sherman died on June 24, aged 81. Argentine-American composer Lalo Schifrin, who wrote iconic film and TV scores such as the Mission Impossible theme, died on June 26, aged 93. Veteran news broadcaster and war correspondent Sandy Gall died on June 29, aged 97. EastEnders actor Frank Barrie, who played choirmaster Edward Bishop and love interest for Dot Cotton, died June 30, aged 88. Film and TV actor Kenneth Colley, who played Jesus in Monty Python's Life of Brian, died on June 30, aged 87.

JULY

Actor Gerald Harper of television series Hadleigh and Adam Adamant Lives! died on July 2, aged 96. Former Conservative Party chairman Sir Norman Tebbit, a survivor of the IRA's Brighton bombing, died on July 7, aged 94. Former Metropolitan Police Commissioner Ian Blair died on July 9, aged 72. TV magician Wayne Dobson died on July 7, aged 68. US singer and actress Connie Francis died on July 16, aged 87. Malcolm-Jamal Warner, who played Theo in The Cosby Show, died on July 20, aged 54, after drowning in Costa Rica. Black Sabbath frontman Ozzy Osbourne died on July 22, aged 76, after suffering a heart attack. Six time world champion wrestler turned media personality Hulk Hogan died on July 24, aged 71. Jazz singer Dame Cleo Laine died on July 24, aged 97. Sylvia Young, British theatre teacher and founder of the Sylvia Young Theatre School, died on July 30, aged 85.

Top Gun star Val Kilmer had battled throat cancer and died in April, aged 64

Express columnist James Whale died in August, aged 74

AUGUST

Author Stella Rimington, the first female director-general of MI5, died on August 3, aged 90. US actress Loni Anderson died on August 3, aged 79. Radio and TV presenter James Whale MBE, who wrote a column for the Daily Express, died on August 4, aged 74, after living with kidney cancer for five years. Songwriter and guitarist Terry Reid, who sang with rock band Peter Jay and the Jaywalkers, died on August 4, aged 75. US astronaut Jim Lovell, one of the first three astronauts to fly to and orbit the Moon, died on August 7, aged 97. Welsh international Terry Hennessey, who played for Birmingham City and Nottingham Forest, died on August 8, aged 82. Actor Ray Brooks, who appeared in Cathy Come Home and Coronation Street, died on August 9, aged 86. Scottish RAF officer John Cruickshank, a Victoria Cross recipient, died on August 9, aged 105. Influential Blue Peter producer Biddy Baxter died aged 92 on August 10. Actor Terence Stamp, star of Sixties cinema, died on August 17, aged 87. US actor, theatrical producer and director Jerry Adler died on August 23, aged 96. David Warburton MP died on August 26, aged 59.

SEPTEMBER

Hungarian-British boxer Joe Bugner died on September 1, aged 75. Katharine, Duchess of Kent, died on September 4, aged 92. Fashion designer Giorgio Armani died on September 4, aged 91. Supertramp founder and singer Rick Davies died on September 6, aged 81. US Right-wing activist Charlie Kirk was shot dead on September 10, aged 31. "People's Champion" boxer Ricky Hatton died by suicide on September 14, aged 46. Legendary Hollywood actor and director Robert Redford died on September 16, aged 89. Cricketer and umpire Dickie Bird died on September 22, aged 92. Former Liberal Party leader and Olympic sprinter Sir Menzies Campbell died on September 26, aged 84. Only Fools and Horses actor Patrick Murray, aka Mickey Pearce, died aged 68 on September 29.

OCTOBER

Conservationish and chimpanzee expert Jane Goodall died on October 1, aged 91. Bonkbuster author Dame Jilly Cooper died on October 5, aged 88, following a fall at her home. Moody Blues musician John Lodge died on October 10, aged 82. Actress Diane Keaton, star of The Godfather and Annie Hall, died on October 11, aged 79. Actor Tony Caunter, who played car salesman Roy Evans in EastEnders, died on October 13, aged 88. Doctor Dolittle actress Samantha Eggar died on October 15, aged 86. Former Sunday Express editor Martin Townsend died on October 17, aged 65, of pancreatic cancer. Lady Annabel Goldsmith, English socialite and namesake of Annabel's nightclub, died on October 18, aged 91. Crossroads actor Tony Adams died on October 25, aged 84. Fawlty Towers star Prunella Scales died on October 27, aged 93.

July saw the death of jazz singer Dame Cleo Laine, who was 97

NOVEMBER

Former US Vice-President Dick Cheney died on November 3, aged 84. England rugby union fly-half and captain Richard Sharp MBE, celebrated for his 1963 Five Nations title win, died on November 3, aged 87. Shirley Valentine star Pauline Collins died on November 5, aged 85. Motoring correspondent and former Top Gear presenter Quentin Willson died on November 8, aged 68. Living in a Box singer-songwriter Richard Darbyshire died on November 10, aged 65. English cricketer Barry Knight, who played for Essex and Leicestershire, died aged 87 on November 10. Oscar-nominated actress Sally Kirkland died on November 11, aged 84. Author Charlotte Bingham died on November 16, aged 83. German singing and dancing twins Alice and Ellen Kessler died together by assisted suicide on November 17, aged 89. Stone Roses bassist Mani died on November 20, aged 63. Wycliffe actor Jack Shepherd died on November 24, aged 85. Reggae legend Jimmy Cliff died on November 24, aged 81. Scottish fashion designer Pam Hogg died on November 26, aged 66. Prolific playwright Tom Stoppard died November 29, aged 88. West Ham legend Billy Bonds died on November 30, aged 79.

DECEMBER

Author Sophie Kinsella, known for her "chick lit' fiction, died of brain cancer, aged 55, on December 10. Scottish comedian and impressionist Stanley Baxter died on December 11, aged 99. Author Joanna Trollope, famous for her "Aga Sagas" died on December 11, aged 82. Notorious gangster Harry Roberts, convicted of murdering three police officers, died on December 13, aged 89, having been released from prison on licence in 2014. US filmmaker Rob Reiner, 78, and his wife Michelle, 70, were found murdered at their home on December 14. Sir Patrick McNair-Wilson, Conservative energy spokesman and the first to attend the National Union of Mineworkers' conference, died on December 17, aged 96. Driving Home For Christmas singer-songwriter Chris Rea died on December 22, aged 74.

30-SECOND CHALLENGE

JUST follow the instructions from left to right, starting with the number given to reach an answer at the end of the row. Set your own 30-second challenge: for the very young or arithmetically rusty, you have 30 seconds for the BEGINNER task. For a greater challenge, try BEGINNER and INTERMEDIATE in 30 seconds. True mental gymnasts should try INTERMEDIATE and ADVANCED in 30 seconds together.

Today's answers can be found in the puzzles pullout

										YOUR ANSWERS
Beginner	46	+14	INCREASE BY 20%	-51	2/3 OF THIS	+41	÷11	+61	÷6	
Intermediate	51	x3	+62	80% OF THIS	+51	REVERSE THE DIGITS	-91	13/21 OF THIS	+89	
Advanced	544	8/17 OF THIS	TAKE THE SQUARE ROOT	+99	x4	+52	TAKE THE CUBE ROOT	+317	80% OF THIS	

THE NATIONAL LOTTERY

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 27
LOTTERY
20 36 40 43 51 55 21

THUNDERBALL
3 21 24 26 33 2

BOXING DAY
EUROMILLIONS
12 22 32 36 48 3 4

THUNDERBALL
3 7 18 23 31 5

CHRISTMAS DAY
SET FOR LIFE
1 4 6 30 47 9

THE HEALTH LOTTERY

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28
1 14 17 18 41 16

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 27
4 9 16 40 41 18

The Health Lottery has raised more than £135m for health-related causes since 2011. Details at thehealthlotteryfoundation.org.uk

PHONE POLL RESULTS

We asked in our poll on Friday:

Should Rachel Reeves change course to avoid an economic downturn?

YES: 100%

NO: 0%

SUDOKU

Fill in all the squares so that each row, each column, and each 3x3 square contain all the digits from 1 to 9

				9			6	7
5		7	8			4	2	
	2			6	5			1
2		5					9	
		8	1	4		2	5	
	9		5			7		3
9			3	8				5
	7	4			1	8		2
	5			7			1	

This is the Quick Sudoku for the solver in a hurry.
For today's solution call:
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MORE PUZZLES – PULLOUT

SATURDAY'S SOLUTION

6	9	1	4	2	3	8	7	5
4	3	7	6	8	5	2	1	9
2	5	8	7	1	9	4	6	3
7	4	5	3	6	8	1	9	2
8	6	2	9	7	1	3	5	4
3	1	9	2	5	4	6	8	7
5	2	6	8	4	7	9	3	1
1	8	3	5	9	2	7	4	6
9	7	4	1	3	6	5	2	8

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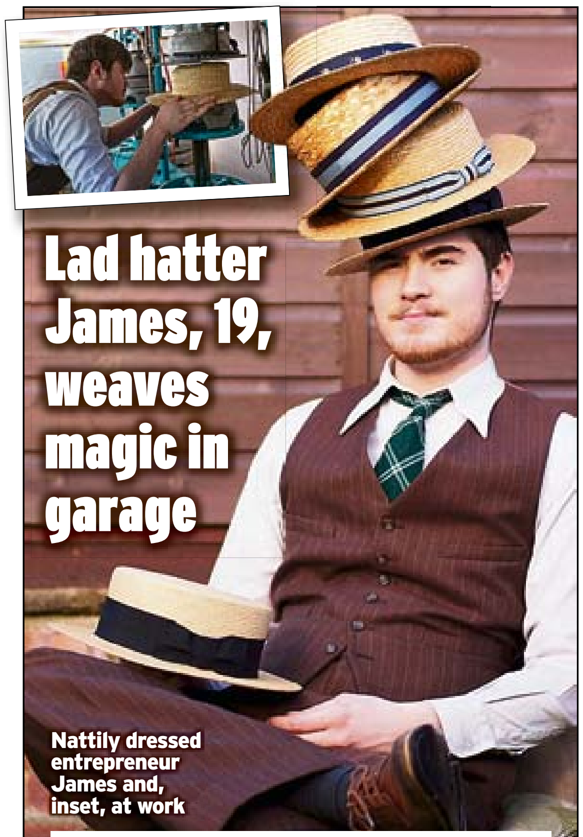

Lad hatter James, 19, weaves magic in garage

Nattily dressed entrepreneur James and, inset, at work

BY **ADAM DUTTON**

THE nation's youngest straw hat maker is keeping the 250-year-old tradition alive – from his garage.

James Anderson, 19, makes 20 straw boaters a month using antique machines donated by a factory. In just six months he has received orders from all round the world.

The teen, from hat-making capital Luton, started his business after local production stopped. He said: "It's never been about money but keeping the tradition alive."

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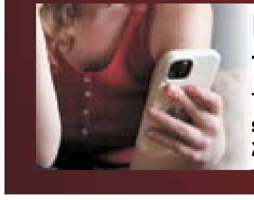

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BEAUTY GET THAT GLOW

Edited by **LAURA MULLEY**

FEELING FREE

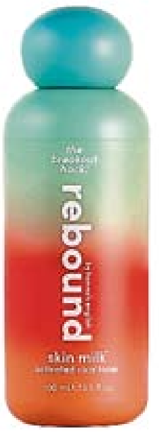
If, like me, you're a fan of skin scents, they don't get much cosier than Kayali's latest collection, with four new fragrances all centred around the nuzzly note of musk. At the risk of sounding like I'm placing a Starbucks order, my favourites are Freedom Musk Latte | 41, which is rich, creamy and comforting, and the sweet and slightly earthy Freedom Musk Matcha | 45, both available in mini 10ml bottles for £28 each, or as part of a set with the other two scents (Bouquet | 27 and Santal | 34) for £88.

Pep up your skin

If your complexion is feeling the effects of the cold weather, peptides might be the answer. These protein messengers tell the skin to produce more collagen, elastin and keratin, and also help to strengthen its barrier, resulting in skin that's smoother, healthier and ready to take on whatever winter throws at it. Find them in CeraVe's new Skin Renewing Peptide Cream, £29, a rich daily moisturiser that also works brilliantly over retinol-based serums.

SOOTH OPERATOR

Somewhere between an essence and a moisturiser, skin milks are having a moment, and one product from trendy Australian skincare brand The Breakout Hack – which recently launched into Boots – is currently making waves online.



Rebound Skin Milk Activated Cica Toner, £14.99, is being praised for the calming effect it has on skin and the dewy, glass-like finish it leaves, while over on TikTok it's being compared to Rhode's Glazing Milk but all for less than half the price.

EYE SPY

Using lash serums is one habit that will absolutely yield results if you're consistent with it, I promise you, and if your new year beauty wish is for longer, thicker eyelashes, groá's Lash Serum is definitely worth trying.

At £20, it's significantly cheaper than a lot of others on the market, is prostaglandin-free so shouldn't irritate the eyes, and 88% of testers reported seeing longer lash hairs after six weeks of use.

HEALTH & BEAUTY

28 Health
30 Dr Rosemary Leonard
33 TV Guide
38 Your Letters
PLUS Horoscopes
PLUS Puzzles

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VIDA GLOW
GREEN APPLE FLAVOUR

GLOW GETTER

Keen to give your skin – and body – a boost in the new year from the inside out? Collagen supplements remain super popular, and Vida Glow's are a favourite with beauty editors for their convenience, taste and results (they use marine collagen, which is widely regarded to be the most effective).

The brand has launched two new variants with added body benefits: Liquid Collagen Skin + Energy and Liquid Collagen Skin + Gut, £39 each for 15 single-dose sachets, uk.vidaglow.com

A LOOK BACK AT the year that was 2025

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LOOK TO THE

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 20

This year's health is a bit of a mixed bag, like a box of chocolates where some bites are delightful and others a bit chewy. A few pesky bugs or weather wobbles might nip at your heels, especially early on.

But here's the deal: your wellbeing will vastly improve once you stop running on fumes. Early mornings, fresh air, and a proper breakfast do wonders. Don't skip sleep for stress, and maybe go easy on the takeaway.

From late October, you'll bounce back with vim and vigour. You'll feel more resistant to illness, and your spark returns. Just remember, it's not heroic to burn out. Pace yourself.

TAURUS APRIL 21-MAY 21

You're off to a cracking start this year. Energy's up, spirits are steady, and you've got that inner glow that comes from a well-balanced life. You're thriving on greens, grains and good habits and it shows.

Come midyear, however, you might feel a bit sluggish. Blame it on overindulgence or simply the grind catching up with you.

Shake off the cobwebs with light yoga, brisk walks, and a few early nights. If you're feeling "meh," it's your body's polite way of saying: slow down, please.

You're not made for rushed routines, regain your calm, and you'll stay as sturdy as ever.

GEMINI MAY 22-JUNE 21

You're shining bright in the first half of the year! Mentally sharp and physically upbeat, you're practically skipping through your days. It's all about that cheerful energy and clear-headed thinking. Keep it up by sticking to your healthy habits (even when tempted by midnight snacks and social whirlwinds).

But don't coast into the second half without a plan. Come late November, things could start to wobble. A surprise sniffle or a stress-related slump could knock you sideways if you're not paying attention.

Listen to your body, and don't put off rest when it calls your name. You're no good to anyone when you're running on empty. Putting your wellbeing first is not selfish. It's sensible.

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 23

Beware: the first half of the year has a few health hiccups hidden in its shell. You may be more vulnerable to seasonal sniffles, tummy troubles or just plain fatigue. If you've got a sweet tooth or a soft spot for carbs, this is the time to rein it in.

Once summer rolls around, however, things will look much rosier. You'll be feeling fresher, lighter and more "you" again. You loved ones may well comment on your newfound glow and energy, and they'll be right.

Stick to simple meals, early nights, and a bit of gentle movement each day. You're far more balanced than you realise, sometimes, all you need is a reset and a bit of fresh air.

LEO JULY 24-AUGUST 23

It is not your most rip-roaring year for health, but it's far from a flop either. The first half is alright if you keep things steady, but don't be surprised if you catch a cold just when things start to get exciting.

Stay hydrated, cut back on the stress-scoffing, and prioritise sleep. Honestly, a lion needs proper rest between their victories.

The second half brings a few minor bumps – coughs, fatigue, or the odd case of the grumps. Get back on track with light exercise, a splash of sunshine and saying "no" to energy vampires.

You'll feel your strength return in full by year's end. Until then, no dramatic exits. Just low drama and high hydration.

VIRGO AUGUST 24-SEPTEMBER 23

This year is all about staying steady, Virgo. The first half brings a few sniffles and stressy spells and you can blame the changing seasons and your knack for caring too much. A bit of overthinking never helped anyone's digestion, you know.

But, worry not, you'll be back in bloom by midyear.

A routine of light exercise, clean eating and good hydration will put the sparkle back in your step. You thrive when your world is tidy. So stock up on herbal teas, organise your medicine cupboard and finally book that check-up.

Just be extra mindful come autumn. One too many late nights and your body may start politely protesting.

FUTURE WITH RUSSELL GRANT

New shape of your health for 2026

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 24-OCTOBER 23

You're in fine form this year. Mind, body and spirit all feel nicely aligned – especially early on. You've got energy, drive and a healthy dollop of peace of mind.

Just keep your diet light and lovely, your exercise regular, and don't underestimate the power of a daily walk with some music, a podcast or a pal.

As the year goes on, you might find your get-up-and-go taking little naps. Don't push through fatigue – honour it. Sleep, water, and an early bedtime are your secret weapons.

You're in a sweet spot overall. With a bit of consistency, you'll float through 2026 with grace and good health.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 24-NOVEMBER 22

The year starts on a murky note. Your health might feel like a bit of a mystery; one day you're fine, the next you're sniffling or sluggish. It's probably nothing serious, but it is your cue to pay attention.

Try not to ignore the niggles, especially when stress or exhaustion creeps in. You're tougher than you look, but even you need decent rest and warmth.

After June, the fog lifts, your immune system kicks in, and your mindset shifts toward wellness. You'll be more inclined to stretch, breathe, and maybe even meditate. By autumn, you'll be feeling more like yourself: sharper, stronger and strangely zen.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 23-DECEMBER 21

You'll be feeling fabulous early on. Vitality is up, your spirits are high, and you're ready to take on the world. Your upbeat mood is medicine in itself – spread it around.

Midyear brings a slight wobble and a wake-up. Indigestion, sluggishness or weather-born bugs may slow you down and cause you to rethink plans and routines. It's nothing dramatic, but it's a signal to rest and reset.

Lay off the spicy takeaways, sip more water and swap late-night scrolling for sleep. Your body is asking for gentleness, not heroics.

By November, you'll feel renewed and better for having taken the scenic route to recovery.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 20

Your year begins on a very strong note, Capricorn. You're feeling focused, balanced and glowing with that rare combo of confidence and calm. Stick to your usual habits as they're clearly working wonders.

But later on, life might throw a few curveballs your way. Nothing you can't manage, but don't brush off symptoms or push through. Stomach, respiratory or seasonal bugs may ask for a timeout or a trip to the experts.

Trust your instincts, and don't be afraid to slow the pace. You're not falling behind – you're pacing yourself like a pro. Investing in yourself and your diet will pay off for years to come.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 21-FEBRUARY 19

The year's split right down the middle, Aquarius. The first half sees some minor complaints: tummy grumbles, infections or just plain old burnout.

Don't panic. A few tweaks, less screen time, more greens and an early bedtime, will work wonders.

From summer onwards, things perk up. Your immune system gets a boost, and you're feeling refreshed and in control. You may even pick up a new wellness hobby – tai chi? Cold dips? Something quirky and perfect for you.

Just don't forget: a little routine can be as revolutionary as anything else. Keep it up.

PISCES FEBRUARY 20-MARCH 20

It's not a rough year, but you must take your health and rest more seriously. You're more delicate than you let on, and little issues could snowball if ignored.

Start with the basics: some gentle exercise, seeing natural light in the morning, less screen time.

Anxiety or money worries may weigh on you, so be kind to your mind as well as your body.

Summer calls for calm routines and fewer late nights. Yoga, stretching or quiet moments in nature do more than medicine.

As the year closes, you'll feel stronger and more centred if you've taken the time to truly look after yourself.

DR ROSEMARY LEONARD

YOUR HEALTH MATTERS

My feet are going pale and blotchy on winter walks

Q I'm 77 and try to go for a walk each day for at least half an hour. For the past few weeks I've noticed my feet feel much colder than they used to, especially if it's very chilly outside. The skin on my feet is also pale and a bit blotchy. I wear thick socks but is there anything else I can do? I'm keen to try and stay active.

A When you are in a cold environment the body prioritises the vital organs, such as the brain and heart, keeping them warm. It does this by narrowing the arteries in the extremities, especially the hands and feet, to keep blood flowing in the inner part of the body. This ensures that it stays at the right temperature but it does mean the fingers, toes, nose and ears can feel very cold.

In some people the blood vessels in the fingers and toes overreact and become painfully cold, turning white or blue – a condition known as Raynaud's disease.

However, this usually starts in the early adult years and in later life another reason is more likely. Some general conditions can cause cold extremities, such as anaemia or an underactive thyroid and some medications, especially beta blockers, can also be to blame.

But your symptoms, with pale feet and blotchy skin, suggest that poor circulation is to blame and this is usually due to narrowed arteries in your legs. This can be linked to smoking, high blood pressure, diabetes or a raised cholesterol level, so you should see your GP who can arrange appropriate tests.

In the meantime don't stop going for your walks, as exercise is good for your circulation, but in addition to thick socks, some boots with a warm lining would help and keeping the rest of your body as warm as possible is important too – so always wear thick gloves, or better still, mittens and a hat.

Q I've had mild asthma since I was a child, but I only tend to get wheezing when I get a cold or a flu-like illness. If my chest feels tight, I use a blue salbutamol inhaler which works well. But my recent request for a new inhaler was turned down and I had to see the nurse. She said I should be using a steroid inhaler every day, even though I only use the blue one occasionally, certainly not every day and sometimes only once a week. This seemed a bit over the top. I asked if she could check with a doctor but he agreed with her. I really don't want to be taking steroids every day, as surely, they have side-effects and could be harmful.

A Asthma is a common condition where from time to time, the airways in the lungs become inflamed, making them narrower and more difficult for air to get in and out of the lungs. This leads to wheezing, coughing and breathlessness, which can range from mild to severe between different people, and also in the same person at different times.

Asthma can be a serious condition, with symptoms getting worse very quickly and can be fatal. In 2022, the latest year for which data is available, 1,465 people died from an asthma attack, including children and young adults as well as older people. These deaths often occur before a person gets to hospital and importantly, 30% occur in patients who report infrequent symptoms.

So now the emphasis on treating asthma has changed from using "reliever" inhalers that widen the airways, such as salbutamol, to preventing them narrowing in the first place. This is done by using steroid inhalers, which prevent the inflammation that causes the narrowing. They need to be used regularly, every day, even when you have no symptoms, and the aim of this is that you only need to use your reliever inhaler occasionally, if at all.

Though most people using them do not have any side-effects, they can increase the risk of getting thrush in the mouth, though this can often be prevented by using a spacer device with the inhaler and rinsing your mouth after wards. More serious side-effects, such as thinning of the skin and easy bruising are much less common and are associated with long term use of high-dose steroid inhalers. Just because you have never had a bad asthma attack does not mean you won't get one in the future but by using a regular steroid "preventer" inhaler, the chances of this happening will be hugely reduced.

COLD COMFORT *keep walking*

Q I am 79 and have been at the same GP practice for 26 years. I've been taking citalopram 20mg for long-standing depression and found it really helped. But when I asked for a repeat prescription recently, I found I'd been given 10mg tablets and only a month's supply, rather than the usual three months. When I finally got to speak to a doctor about it, who I'd never spoken to before, I was told this was because of "potential suicides". This seemed ridiculous to me and after arguing that I was more likely to become suicidal if the dose was reduced, he eventually agreed to put me back on the 20mg, but only for a month. What should I do?

A This does seem rather bizarre. Citalopram is one of group of selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI) drugs, which are widely used to treat anxiety and depression.

A lot of research has been done on whether they increase the risk of suicide but the results are conflicting and inconclusive, with some showing a slight increased risk, some a decreased risk, and some no change, and as you say, depression itself is a suicide risk.

The consensus of most mental health experts is that the benefits of SSRI's outweigh the risks, though it is important that patients have a regular review. I suggest you ask to see a different GP to discuss the issue well before you need a new supply of pills.

If you have a health question for Dr Leonard, email her in confidence at yourhealth@express.co.uk. Dr Leonard regrets she cannot enter into personal correspondence or reply to everyone

HOLD OFF ON ADDING SALT TO YOUR COFFEE

A leading scientist has warned against the latest coffee trend – adding salt not sugar.

Complicated coffee orders are nothing new, with Brits opting for syrups, chocolate and spices, but this new trend suggests fans are taking this to extremes with searches for "salt in coffee" rising 35% in the last month.

Psychologist Dr Eleanor Bryant from the University of Bradford, explains: "Salt enhances flavours by moderating the perception of caffeine's bitter notes which can sometimes make coffee taste sweeter. But there is no scientific evidence to support any health benefits of adding salt to coffee.

"In fact, increasing your salt intake in this way could be harmful, particularly for people who drink multiple cups a day."

But why do people choose to make such strange tweaks to their daily brew? Dr Bryant explains the real reason could all be down to our genes. "How a person perceives the flavour of coffee is highly genetic and can be influenced by dominant and recessive genes related to bitter taste perception. You're either born inclined to like bitter flavours or not.

"But those who adjust their coffee are essentially adding what's called a 'flavour nudge' to make it enjoyable for their palate."

Meanwhile, a study by Philips has revealed two out of five (38%) people admit making coffee for someone fills them with dread as complicated additions get out of control.

Dr Bryant adds: "The healthiest and purest way to drink your coffee is without any additions at all.

"If you start with quality beans, ground correctly in a barista-standard coffee machine and brewed well, you're far less likely to feel the need for any flavour tweaks – it should taste great on its own."

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TODAY'S TV ONES TO WATCH

by **MIKE WARD** *TV critic*

MASTERCHEF FESTIVE EXTRAVAGANZA: CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS, BBC1, 8PM

THOMAS Frake! Chariya Khattiyot! Brin Pirathapan! Natalie Coleman! I'm sure you don't need me to tell you these are all ex-MasterChef winners. Or maybe you do. Anyway, what matters is they're back, for a best-of-the-best challenge.

So that's nice. And who knows, if it becomes a regular thing, featuring other ex-winners, we'll eventually have several champions of champions.

At which point, they could compete to be champion of champions of champions.

Be honest, you've heard worse ideas. But not in a while.

FILM: ON THE BUSES (1971), ITV3, 2.55PM

YOU'LL find this hard to believe, I'm sure, but the big-screen version of ITV's early-Seventies sitcom, in which driver Stan (Reg Varney) and conductor Jack (Bob Grant) try to sabotage plans to let women take the wheel, didn't appeal to the critics. One called it "atrocious". Another preferred "grotesque".

The Monthly Film Bulletin labelled it "unpleasant in the extreme".

No great surprise, then, that when the end-of-year box office figures were revealed, On The Buses was sitting proudly at the top of the pile, having taken more money than runners-up Get Carter and Diamonds Are Forever combined.

Pick of the day

THE CELEBRITY APPRENTICE: CHRISTMAS SPECIAL, BBC1, 9PM

LITTLE HELPERS *Lord Sugar with advisers Mike Soutar and Baroness Brady*

BOARDROOM GETS EVEN FROSTIER

IF you've been at the top of the business tree (or is it a ladder?) for as long as Lord Sugar, you're bound to have a bulging book of contacts. In his case, they're contacts who carry some clout, judging from the call he makes at the start of this show. "Santa, hi, it's Lord Sugar here," he announces to the famous old fellow on the end of the line. "I wonder if you could do me a little favour."

If I were Santa, I'd be wary. What sort of favour might this be? Is Lord Sugar hoping to shift a pile of Amstrad PCW 9512 word processors he's had gathering dust in a lock-up since 1986? Or a stack of those funny phones of his, on which, thanks to the little built-in keypad, you could actually tap out a whole email, often in less than a month? Turns out it's neither. "I've got these celebrities," he continues, "that I'm supposed to put through their paces for Children In Need. I don't suppose you need a few extra elves, do you?"

And Santa, of course, being kindness personified, doesn't hesitate. "I think I might have just the thing!" he replies.

You and I might react differently.

"Before I commit," I'd personally be telling Lord Sugar, "please define what you mean by 'celebrity'. You're not going to send me blooming Max from EastEnders, are you? Or someone from Radio1 I've never heard of? Or that gobby ex-candidate of yours who says 'bosh' and got kicked off Strictly in week two?"

Needless to say, Lord Sugar is sending all that lot and more. Sending them to Lapland, that is, to make gingerbread.

The others, since you ask, are Rob Rinder, AJ Odudu, Sarah Hadland, Angela Scanlon, Eddie Kadi, JB Gill, Kadeena Cox, Matt Morsia (Legend from Gladiators), Sarah Hadland and Shazia Mirza.

"You'll have to devise a recipe, brand your biscuit, shoot the TV advert and record a radio jingle," he tells them.

Obviously, I shan't spoil it for you by revealing how they get on (part two is tomorrow, by the way) but at one point later we do hear him yell: "Your advert sucks!"

So either one of the teams has made a hash of their commercial or Lord Sugar's on the phone to the makers of Pepto Bismol.

BEST DRAMA

MIDSOMER MURDERS, ITV1, 8.30PM

The demise of the Shirewell patriarch sparks an inheritance dispute. He left three children, including Lucian, who plans to evict the family.

BEST QUIZ

CELEBRITY MASTERMIND, BBC2, 7.30PM

Braving the black chair in the hope of winning cash for their charity are Dean Franklin, Chloe Petts, Ashley John-Baptiste and Robyn Cowen.

BEST FILM

MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS CHANNEL 4, 8PM

Kenneth Branagh is Poirot in this whodunnit which sees the likes of Penélope Cruz, Willem Dafoe and Judi Dench in the frame for murder.

BEST SOAP

EASTENDERS, BBC1, 7.30PM

The Beales and Brannings prepare to celebrate Jimmy's christening, and one Walford family attempts to navigate a way forward.

TODAY'S PREVIEWS ARE ON THE PREVIOUS PAGE

FILM RATINGS

★★★★★ BRILLIANT
★★★★ VERY GOOD
★★★ GOOD
★★ AVERAGE
★ BAD

(R) REPEAT

ALL PROGRAMMES ARE LISTED IN GREENWICH MEAN TIME (GMT).

BBC One

6.00am Breakfast News headlines.

9.10 Room on the Broom Animated adaptation. (R)

9.35 The Famous Five (R)

11.00 Celebrity Homes Under the Hammer Dion Dublin is joined by Toyah Willcox to look around a house in her native Birmingham. (R)

12.00noon Bargain Hunt: Tiny Treasures Roo Irvine delves into the archive to share some miniature items. (R)

12.45 BBC News at One; Weather

1.15 FILM **Peter Rabbit 2: The Runaway** (2021, U) Adventure sequel, with the voice of James Corden. ★★★★

2.40 FILM **Back to the Future** (1985, PG) Sci-fi comedy, with Michael J Fox and Christopher Lloyd. ★★★★★

4.30 Celebrity Bridge of Lies: EastEnders Special (R)

5.15 Pointless Celebrities With Ugo Monye, Sarah Hunter, Beth Tweddle and Vanessa Bauer. (R)

6.00 BBC News at Six; Weather

6.20 Regional News; Weather

BBC Two

6.10am Secrets of the Conclave A rare glimpse at rituals. (R)

7.10 Sign Zone: Gladiators: Celebrity Special (R)

8.10 Match of the Day (R)

9.00 FILM **The Cockleshell Heroes** (1955, U) Fact-based Second World War drama, with Jose Ferrer. ★★★★

10.35 FILM **The Battle of the River Plate** (1956, U) Second World War drama, starring Anthony Quayle. ★★★

12.30pm Snow Wolf Family and Me Gordon Buchanan follows the wolves as they hunt. (R)

1.30 FILM **North by Northwest** (1959, PG) Hitchcock thriller, starring Cary Grant. ★★★★★

3.45 FILM **Death on the Nile** (1978, PG) Hercule Poirot investigates the murder of an unpopular heiress on board a paddle steamer in Egypt. Agatha Christie mystery, starring Peter Ustinov. ★★★

6.00 Mortimer & Whitehouse: Gone Christmas Fishing Paul and Bob fish in Devon and Cornwall and are joined by local star Dawn French. (R)

ITV1

6.00am Good Morning Britain A lively mix of news, current affairs and lifestyle features.

9.00 James Martin's Saturday Morning at Christmas With special guests Aled Jones and Greg James. (R)

11.05 Fletchers' Family Farm at Christmas Kelvin, Liz and the children head to Austria. (R)

12.10pm FILM **Shrek 2** (2004, U) Animated adventure sequel, with the voices of Mike Myers and Cameron Diaz. ★★★★

1.55 ITV News; Weather

2.05 Regional News; Weather

2.15 FILM **Fantastic Beasts: The Secrets of Dumbledore** (2022, 12) Professor Albus Dumbledore must assist Newt Scamander and his colleagues as Grindelwald leads an army to destroy all Muggles. Fantasy sequel, with Eddie Redmayne. ★★★

5.00 Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? Christmas Special Joe Marler and Katherine Ryan take part. (R)

6.00 The Chase Quiz show, hosted by Bradley Walsh. (R)

Channel 4

6.10am Cheers Triple bill. (R)

7.30 Everybody Loves Raymond Double bill of the comedy. (R)

8.20 Frasier Triple bill. (R)

9.50 Junior Bake Off Highlights from the ninth series. (R)

11.20 A Place in the Sun Craig Rowe helps a couple buy a holiday home in Tenerife. (R)

12.25pm Channel 4 News Summary Headlines.

12.30 Chateau DIY at Christmas Tim and Krys give the stairs of their Dordogne chateau a medieval makeover. (R)

1.30 Four in a Bed Five episodes. The first destination is 35 Main Street in Pembrokeshire; the second visit of the week is to Chillderness in Powys; staying at Redberth Gardens in Tenby; a trip to Bae Abermaw B&B in Gwynedd; the week's winning B&B is announced. (R)

4.00 Channel 4 News

4.30 PopMaster TV: Festive DJ Special With Bob Harris, Katie Thistleton, OJ Borg, Jenny Powell and Rickie Haywood-Williams. (R)

5

6.00am Milkshake! Children's TV.

9.20 World's Most Expensive All-You-Can-Eat Buffet Grace Dent visits some of the most luxurious buffets. (R)

10.15 FILM **Hook** (1991, U) Fantasy adventure, starring Robin Williams, Dustin Hoffman and Julia Roberts. ★★★

12.45pm 5 News at Lunchtime

1.15 FILM **Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl** (2003, 12) A rogue captain and a blacksmith set sail to rescue a governor's daughter from feared supernatural pirates. Swashbuckling adventure, starring Johnny Depp and Keira Knightley. ★★★★★

4.00 FILM **Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest** (2006, 12) Captain Jack Sparrow battles to save his soul from the legendary Davy Jones and his fearsome sea monster. Swashbuckling adventure sequel, starring Johnny Depp and Orlando Bloom. ★★★★; 5 News Update

7.30pm, EASTENDERS: Jack, Max and Lauren

7.30pm, CELEBRITY MASTERMIND: Chloe Petts

8pm, CORONATION STREET: Sarah and Kit

4.30pm, POPMASTER TV: FESTIVE DJ SPECIAL: Ken Bruce

8pm, POLICE INTERCEPTORS: Harrison

BBC One

7

6.30 Celebrity Escape to the Country With broadcaster and presenter Angellica Bell.

7.30 EastEnders The Beales and Brannings prepare for Jimmy's christening, and one Walford family attempts to navigate a way forward after Christmas.

8

8.00 MasterChef Festive Extravaganza: Champion of Champions Previous victors Natalie Coleman, Thomas Frake, Chariya Khattiyot and Brin Pirathapan take on two new challenges to show how far they have progressed.

9

9.00 The Celebrity Apprentice: Christmas Special Part one of two. Famous faces including AJ Odudu, Charlie Hedges, Rob Rinder, JB Gill and Jake Wood make and sell gingerbread biscuits to raise money for Children in Need.

10

10.00 BBC News at Ten

10.20 Regional News; Weather

10.30 Amandaland Christmas Special The family spends Christmas at the country house of Amanda's aunt, but revisiting the joys of the past is not easy. (R)

11

11.00 FILM **Clueless** (1995, 12) A teenager tries to boost her new friend's image, but her own popularity suffers as a result. Comedy inspired by Jane Austen's Emma, with Alicia Silverstone, Stacey Dash and Brittany Murphy. ★★★★

12 MIDNIGHT

12.35am Would I Lie to You? at Christmas. Festive edition of the panel show, hosted by Rob Brydon, with Jools Holland, Swarzy Shire, Helen George and David Walliams joining regulars David Mitchell and Lee Mack. (R) **1.05** Weather for the Week Ahead **1.10-6.00am** BBC News

BBC Two

7.00 Richard Osman's Festive House of Games With Alex Brooker, Rhys Darby, Joanna Page and Molly Rainford.

7.30 Celebrity Mastermind Dean Franklin, Chloe Petts, Ashley John-Baptiste and Robyn Cowen answer questions.

8.00 Only Connect Victoria Coren Mitchell hosts another match in the knockout stage as the Doctors Matthews take on the Worker Bees.

8.30 Christmas University Challenge St Hilda's College, Oxford takes on Edinburgh.

9.00 Titanic Sinks Tonight Dramatised documentary recounting the ship's 1912 voyage.The captain orders the ship to be evacuated, but with not enough lifeboat places for everyone on board, the rescue mission quickly unravels.

10.00 FILM **The Godfather Part II** (1974, 18) Mafia don Michael Corleone sets out to clinch a make-or-break deal with an ageing gangster – but his plans are blown apart by a traitor within the family. Michael's story is intercut with flashback sequences chronicling the early life of his father Vito as he makes the shift from immigrant grocery-store clerk to Mob kingpin. Francis Ford Coppola's Oscar-winning crime drama sequel, with Al Pacino, Robert De Niro and Robert Duvall. ★★★★★

1.10am Sign Zone: Countryfile: A Cornish Christmas. The magic of Cadgwith on the Cornish coast at Christmas. (R) **2.05** Sign Zone: Death in Paradise. Four co-workers find a stranger dead at their villa. (R) **3.35** Sign Zone: Secrets of the Conclave (R) **4.35-6.00am** This Is BBC Two

ITV1

7.00 ITV Evening News Today's headlines; Weather

7.10 Regional News; Weather

7.30 Emmerdale Drama from the Dales. There is still a threat to life in the village, while April makes a shocking discovery and Jai knows too much.

8.00 Coronation Street George and Glenda celebrate their birthdays, while Sarah and Kit are puzzled by Carla's silence.

8.30 NEW **Midsomer Murders** The death of an ancient estate's patriarch leads to rivalry and murder when his rebellious son plans to sell it off, outraging his siblings. Detective drama, starring Neil Dudgeon, Nick Hendrix and Fiona Dolman, with guest stars Peter Serafinowicz, Alex Macqueen, Agni Scott and Sarah Woodward.

10.30 ITV News; Weather

10.45 FILM **Raiders of the Lost Ark** (1981, PG) Archaeologist Indiana Jones goes in search of the Ark of the Covenant, a biblical artefact of devastating power. His quest leads him to Egypt, where the Nazis are plotting to use the Ark to further Hitler's plans for world domination – aided by Jones's deceitful French rival. The first of five big-screen action adventures, starring Harrison Ford as Indy, with Karen Allen and Paul Freeman. ★★★★★

12.50am Shop on TV **3.00** The Hunting Wives. Jed considers running for governor as Margo works to protect their privacy, while Sophie faces her past as she rebuilds her confidence. (R) **3.50** Unwind with ITV **5.05-6.00am** Fletchers' Country Workshop. Liz showcases her passion for crafts. (R)

Channel 4

5.30 FILM **The Hunt for Red October** (1990, PG) A Soviet submarine commander alarms both the American and Russian governments as he pilots his vessel toward the US. Cold War thriller, starring Sean Connery. ★★★★

8.00 FILM **Murder on the Orient Express** (2017, 12) An American businessman travelling on the Orient Express from Istanbul to Paris tries to hire Hercule Poirot to be his bodyguard as he has had death threats made against him. The sleuth refuses, but wakes up the following morning to learn the man has been stabbed to death while the train was held up by heavy snow. Agatha Christie mystery, directed by and starring Kenneth Branagh, with Daisy Ridley. ★★★

10.15 FILM **Gangs of New York** (2002, 18) An Irishman in 19th-century New York is taken under the wing of the ruthless gang leader who killed his father 15 years before, and rises up the ranks of power – all the while plotting his revenge. Meanwhile, the tension caused by the enforced drafting of the population into the army to fight in the Civil War explodes into bloodshed and riots. Historical drama, starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Daniel Day-Lewis. ★★★★

1.15am FILM Happiest Season (2020, 12) Romantic comedy, starring Kristen Stewart and Mackenzie Davis. ★★★★ **3.00** Frasier (R) **3.25** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA (R) **4.15** George Clarke's Old House, New Home (R) **5.10** Sunday Brunch (R) **5.25-6.15am** Hollyoaks Omnibus (R)

5

7.00 World's Strongest Man 2025 Action from heat three, held at California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento. Presented by James Richardson, Eddie Hall and Michelle Ackerley; 5 News Update

8.00 Police Interceptors Richie and Harrison join the pursuit of a Toyota that failed to stop, with the reckless runaway taking his life in his hands with erratic driving that comes to an abrupt conclusion when he crashes into a lamppost.

9.00 FILM **Con Air** (1997, 18) Former soldier Cameron Poe is released on parole and takes a flight home aboard a maximum-security plane conveying some of America's most dangerous criminals. When the felons hijack the plane in mid-flight, Poe is forced to intervene. Meanwhile, US marshal Vince Larkin has an ongoing battle on the ground to prevent the plane from being blown to pieces. Action thriller, starring Nicolas Cage and John Cusack. ★★★★

11.15 FILM **Face/Off** (1997, 18) An FBI agent has the face of a terrorist grafted onto his own to foil a bombing, only for the criminal to assume his identity. Action thriller, starring Nicolas Cage and John Travolta. ★★★★

1.55 PlayOJO Live Casino Show **3.55** Harry & Meghan vs the Monarchy. A look at what the future holds for the Duke and Duchess of Sussex. (R) **5.05** Entertainment News on 5 **5.10** Fireman Sam: double bill (R) **5.30** Pip and Posy (R) **5.35** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom (R) **5.45-6.00am** Milo (R)

ITV2 FREEVIEW 6

6.00am CITV **7.45** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **7.55** Celebrity Dinner Date **10.00** Deal or No Deal: Celebrity Special **11.00** Ant and Dec's Limitless Win Christmas Special **12.05pm** Celebrity Catchphrase **1.10** FILM Charlotte's Web (2006, U) Drama, with the voice of Julia Roberts. ★★★ **3.00** FILM Ice Age 3: Dawn of the Dinosaurs (2009, U) Animated adventure, with the voice of John Leguizamo. ★★★ **4.55** FILM Shrek the Third (2007, U) Animation, with the voice of Mike Myers. ★★★

6.45 FILM **School of Rock** (2003, PG) Comedy, starring Jack Black. ★★★★

9.00 FILM **The Dark Knight Rises** (2012, 12) Comic-book thriller sequel, starring Christian Bale. ★★★★★

12.15am Family Guy: double bill**1.10** American Dad! **2.10** Deep Fake Neighbour Wars **2.40** Deal or No Deal: Celebrity Special **3.30** Secret Crush **5.15-6.00am** Unwind with ITV

U&Dave FREEVIEW 19

7.35am Top Gear Africa Special **10.00** Guy Martin: Proper Jobs **11.00** Red Bull Soapbox Race 2022 **1.00pm** Mortimer & Whitehouse: Gone Fishing **3.00** Top Gear: Burma Special **5.40** QI

6.20 QI Bill Bailey, Jack Carroll and Olga Koch join regular Alan Davies as Sandi Toksvig hosts the quiz with a difference, asking questions on the theme of rogue.

7.00 Would I Lie to You? Triple bill. Comedy panel show, hosted by Rob Brydon, in which David Mitchell and Lee Mack's teams deceive their opponents.

9.00 QI XL Sandi Toksvig quizzes Sally Phillips, Josh Pugh, Aaron Simmonds and Alan Davies on upbringing.

10.00 Have I Got a Bit More News for You Victoria Coren Mitchell is guest host of this extended episode.

11.00 Would I Lie to You? Double bill.

12.20am Mock the Week **1.40** Would I Lie to You? **2.15** Dave Gorman: Modern Life Is Goodish **4.00-6.00am** Teleshopping

E4 FREEVIEW 13

6.00am Hollyoaks **6.55** Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **7.00** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA **9.00** The Goldbergs **10.00** The Simpsons **11.30** The Big Bang Theory: thirteen episodes

6.00pm The Big Bang Theory Double bill.

7.00 Hollyoaks Donny is on a mission.

7.30 The Simpsons Triple bill. Homer is accused of stealing a million-dollar painting; Marge, Homer and the kids discover Moe is estranged from his family; Lisa rekindles her love of jazz.

9.00 Celebrity Gogglebox Antiques Roadshow and Basic Instinct are appraised. Last in series.

10.00 Celebrity Gogglebox for SU2C Celebrities join the Gogglebox regulars.

11.05 First Dates A 23-year-old make-up artist who has struggled to find a man.

12.05am Naked Attraction **1.10** The Inbetweeners **2.10** Celebrity Gogglebox **3.05** First Dates **4.00** The Goldbergs **4.50-6.00am** Don't Tell the Bride

ITVQuiz FREEVIEW 28

9.00am Lingo **10.00** Tenable **11.00** Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? Celebrity Special **12.00noon** Beat the Chasers **1.00** Ant & Dec's Limitless Win **2.00** Tipping Point **3.00** Tenable **4.00** Bullseye **5.00** Wheel of Fortune

6.00 Lingo Word game, hosted by Adil Ray.

7.05 Ant & Dec's Limitless Win Dan and Sarah and Nik and Khajal take part.

8.05 Bullseye Freddie Flintoff hosts as three more pairs compete against one another under the watchful eye of official scorer Richard Ashdown.

9.05 Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? Celebrity Special Julie Hesmondhalgh and Tony Bellew compete.

10.05 The Chase Celebrity Special Bradley Walsh presents as celebrities including Lucy Porter face five Chasers.

11.05 Tipping Point Ben Shephard hosts.

12.00m't Bullseye. Darts-based quiz. **12.55** Wheel of Fortune **1.50** Unwind with ITV **2.00-9.00am** Teleshopping

U&Drama FREEVIEW 20

7.40am Doctors **8.50** Classic Holby City **9.50** Classic Casualty **10.55** The Bill **12.00noon** Classic EastEnders **1.20** Miss Marple **3.40** Bergerac

6.00 Last of the Summer Wine Triple bill. Howard finds incriminating evidence; Foggy gives Compo a hand; Compo comes to terms with being less agile.

8.00 Judge John Deed John accuses Everard of corruption and Monty responds by putting pressure on Jo, ostracising her to the point where she begs John to back down.

10.00 New Tricks The case of a missing PE teacher is reinvestigated when the remains of a body are discovered near the elite public boarding school where he taught. Nicola Walker guest stars.

11.20 Waking the Dead Part two of two. Hunt is released from custody.

12.40am Hotel Portofino. Drama set in the 1920s. **1.55** A Small Light **3.00** Darby and Joan **4.00-6.00am** Teleshopping

More4 FREEVIEW 18

8.55am A Place in the Sun **10.25** Four in a Bed: five episodes **1.05pm** Find It, Fix It, Flog It **3.10** Come Dine with Me: five episodes **5.50** A Place in the Sun

6.55 Grand Designs Double bill. Kevin McCloud follows the progress of a dual-purpose family and wheelchair-friendly home; an architect transforms an old agricultural building in Co Down.

9.00 Supercruising: Life at Sea Dancer Summer from Milton Keynes is one of the newest recruits to the crew sailing the Caribbean, and is acclimatising to performing on a rocky stage while missing family back home.

10.00 Two Men on a Bike Double bill. David Baddiel and Hugh Dennis travel along the Canal du Midi; on the final leg of their journey, David and Hugh head to the Mediterranean port of Le Somail.

12.05am 24 Hours in A&E. Documentary double bill. **2.15** 999: On the Front Line **3.20-3.45am** Food Unwrapped

Variations & S4C

WALES As BBC1 except: 1.05-1.15pm BBC Wales Today; Weather **6.20-6.30** BBC Wales Today; Weather **10.20** BBC Wales Today; Weather **10.30** Christmas Top 5 **11.00** Amandaland Christmas Special. The family spends Christmas at the country house of Amanda's aunt. **11.30pm-1.05am** FILM Clueless (1995, 12) Comedy, starring Alicia Silverstone and Stacey Dash.★★★★

MERIDIAN As ITV1 except: 2.05-2.15pm ITV News Meridian; Weather. The headlines. **7.10-7.30pm** ITV News Meridian; Weather

CENTRAL As ITV1 except: 2.05-2.15pm ITV News Central; Weather **7.10-7.30pm** ITV News Central; Weather. The day's headlines.

ITV WALES As ITV1 except: 2.05-2.15pm ITV News Cymru Wales; Weather **7.10-7.30pm** ITV News Wales at Six; Weather. The headlines.

WEST As ITV1 except: 2.05-2.15pm ITV News West Country; Weather. The latest headlines. **7.10-7.30pm** ITV News West Country; Weather

ANGLIA As ITV1 except: 2.05-2.15pm ITV News Anglia; Weather. The day's headlines. **7.10-7.30pm** ITV News Anglia; Weather

WESTCOUNTRY As ITV1 except: 2.05-2.15pm ITV News West Country; Weather **7.10-7.30pm** ITV News West Country; Weather

S4C 6.00am Cyw **12.00noon** Sain Ffagan **12.30pm** Welsh Whisperer – Ni'n Teithio Nawr! **1.00** Guinness World Records Cymru 2025 **2.00** Newyddion S4C a'r Tywydd **2.05** Iolo: Natur Bregus Cymru **3.00** Newyddion S4C a'r Tywydd **3.05** Cymry Waw! **4.00** Awr Fawr **5.00** Stwnsh **6.15** Rownd a Rownd. It's time to celebrate Gwenno and Vince's wedding. Iestyn is heartbroken when an unexpected situation brings to light the truth about his jealousy. **7.15** Newyddion S4C a'r Tywydd **7.30** Newyddion y Flwyddyn 2025. A special news programme looking back at the headlines of 2025. **8.15** Sgwrs Dan y Lloer. Elin Fflur chats to singer and actress Tara Bethan. Last in series. **8.55** Newyddion S4C a'r Tywydd **9.00** Cefn Gwlad. Profile of butcher Ieuan Edwards. **10.00** Sgorio. Action from recent matches. **10.30** Tanwen & Ollie. Ollie succeeds in keeping the couple's engagement a big surprise. **11.00-11.35pm** Dim Cwsg i Quinnell. Scott Quinnell helps with milking on a farm near Bridgend.

BBC3 FREEVIEW 23

7.00pm The Catch Up News.

7.05 FILM **Despicable Me** (2010, U) Animated comedy, featuring the voice of Steve Carell. ★★★★

8.30 FILM **Despicable Me 2** (2013, U) A reformed criminal mastermind aids a secret agent in capturing one of his fellow evil geniuses. Animated comedy sequel, with the voices of Steve Carell and Kristen Wiig. ★★★

10.05 FILM **Minions** (2015, U) Three creatures become henchmen to an evil genius. Animated comedy, with the voice of Sandra Bullock. ★★★★

11.30 Click and Collect Festive comedy, starring Stephen Merchant and Asim Chaudhry.

12.25am The Young Offenders Christmas Special 2018 **1.00** The Young Offenders Christmas Special 2024 **1.25** Bad Education: A Christmas Carol **2.00-3.55am** Gavin & Stacey: four episodes

BBC4 FREEVIEW 9

7.00pm Royal Institution Christmas Lectures: Is There Life Beyond Earth? Maggie Aderin-Pocock searches for life in the rest of the Earth's solar system.

8.00 Blue Planet II: Oceans of Wonder Highlights from the second series of David Attenborough's natural history documentary.

9.00 Bob Monkhouse: The Last Stand A stand-up performance recorded in the summer of 2003.

10.00 Tom Stoppard: A Charmed Life – Imagine The playwright discusses his life and career.

11.30 FILM **Shakespeare in Love** (1998, 15) Period romantic comedy, starring Joseph Fiennes and Gwyneth Paltrow. ★★★★★

1.25am Inside Classical: The Hound of the Baskervilles **2.45-3.45am** Royal Institution Christmas Lectures: Is There Life Beyond Earth?

GB News FREEVIEW 236

6.00am Breakfast with Eamonn and Ellie **9.30** Britain's Newsroom **12.00noon** Good Afternoon Britain **3.00** Martin Daubney. Updates.

6.00 Dewbs & Co Plain-speaking, straight-talking – Michelle Dewberry delivers her take on the day's news.

7.00 Farage An action-packed hour of topical discussion and debate.

8.00 Jacob Rees-Mogg's State Of The Nation Join Jacob for his unique and unmissable take on the news.

9.00 Patrick Christys Tonight The latest topical discussion and debate.

11.00 Patrick Christys Tonight Late Edition Tomorrow's news, tonight. All the major stories making the front pages and full coverage of all the breaking news at home and abroad.

12.00m't The Late Show Live **2.00** Farage Replay **3.00** Patrick Christys Tonight Replay **5.00-6.00am** Patrick Christys Tonight Late Edition

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Sport

SKY SPORTS MAIN EVENT

6.00am Sky Sports Catch Up **7.00** Sky Sports Breakfast. The latest headlines and reports. **8.00** The Best of the Big Bash League

8.10 LIVE **Big Bash League** Coverage of Hobart Hurricanes v Melbourne Renegades.

11.30 Sky Sports FC **12.00noon** Lunchtime Live

12.30 LIVE **World Darts Championship** Coverage of the afternoon session on day 16.

4.30 Sports Desk **5.00** The Premier League Show

5.30 LIVE **EFL** Coventry City v Ipswich Town (kick-off 6.00pm). Coverage of the Championship match from Coventry Building Society Arena.

8.00 LIVE **World Darts Championship** Coverage of the evening session on day 16.

11.00 A League of Their Own **12.00m't** Sky Sports News. The latest headlines.

1.00 LIVE **NFL** Coverage of Atlanta Falcons v Los Angeles Rams (kick-off 1.15am).

4.30-6.00am LIVE **NBA Basketball** Portland Trail Blazers v Dallas Mavericks (Tip-off 4.00am).

SKY SPORTS CRICKET

6.00am Big Bash League **7.00** Best of J Anderson: 500th Wicket **7.10** Big Bash League

8.10 LIVE **Big Bash League** Coverage of Hobart Hurricanes v Melbourne Renegades.

11.30 Best of England v South Africa **11.45** Best of ICC WT20 **12.00noon** Big Bash League **3.00** Best of J Anderson **3.10** Best of Sky Cricket

3.20 LIVE **SA20** Coverage of Sunrisers Eastern Cape v Pretoria Capitals.

7.00 Big Bash League **8.00** Big Bash League **9.00** SA20 **10.00** Big Bash League **11.00** Big Bash League **2.20am** Best of J Anderson **2.30** Best of England v South Africa **2.45** Best of ICC WT20 **3.00-6.00am** Big Bash League

SKY SPORTS FOOTBALL

6.00am EFL Play-off Final C'Ship 15/16 **7.00** EFL Play-off Final League 1 15/16 **8.00** EFL Play-off Final League 2 15/16 **9.00** SPFL Round-Up **9.15** SPFL Highlights **9.45** EFL Greatest Games **10.00** EFL Cup Retro **12.00noon** SPFL Round-Up **12.15** SPFL Highlights **12.45** EFL Highlights **2.30** EFL League One Goals **3.00** EFL League Two Goals **3.30** EFL Highlights **3.45** SPFL Round-Up **4.00** SPFL Highlights **4.30** Bundesliga Special: Midseason Review

5.30 LIVE **EFL** Coventry City v Ipswich Town (kick-off 6.00pm). Coverage of the Championship match from Coventry Building Society Arena.

8.00 LIVE **EFL** Coverage of Birmingham City v Southampton (kick-off 8.15pm). Coverage of the Championship match from St Andrew's @ Knighthead Park. The teams produced a seven-goal thriller the last time they faced each other here in the 2023/24 season.

10.45 SPFL Round-Up **11.00** EFL Greatest Games **12.00m't** EFL **1.00** EFL Highlights **3.00** EFL Greatest Games **4.00-6.00am** SPFL

SKY SPORTS GOLF

6.00am PGA Championship Golf

2.00pm TGL **4.00** Junior Golf **4.30** PGA Champs Official Film 2012 **5.30** PGA Champs Official Film 2014 **6.30** PGA Championship Official Films **7.30** Rory's 2025 **9.00** AIG Women's Open Official Film 2025 **10.00** 2025 PGA Tour Year in Review **11.00** PGA Tour FedEx Cup Playoffs Official Film 2025 **12.00m't** PGA Champs Official Film 2010 **1.00** PGA Champs Official Film 2011 **2.00** PGA Champs Official Film 2016 **3.00** PGA Champs Official Film 2018 **4.00** PGA Champs Official Film 2020 **5.00-6.00am** PGA Champs Official Film 2022

TNT SPORTS 1

7.30am TNT Sports Cricket Reload

8.00 LIVE **Isuzu UTE A-League** Melbourne Victory v Wellington Phoenix (kick-off 6.00am).

10.00 The Ashes. The latest highlights.

11.00 LIVE **Ultimate Pool Taom Pro Cup** Coverage of the afternoon session on day three.

5.00pm Premier League Review **6.00** The Ashes

7.00 LIVE **Ultimate Pool Taom Pro Cup** Coverage of the evening session on day three.

10.00 The Ashes. The latest highlights.

11.00pm-7.30am LIVE **The Ashes Live** Australia v England. Coverage of day five.

TNT SPORTS 2

6.00am Premier League Review **7.00** Serie A **9.00** Premier League **10.30** The Big Interview **11.00** Ally's Social Club **11.45** Cyclocross

12.45pm LIVE **Cyclocross** Coverage of the Women's Trophy event form Loenhout, Belgium.

1.45 Champions League – Stories of the Finals

2.00 LIVE **Cyclocross** Coverage of the Women's Trophy event from Loenhout, Belgium.

3.15 The Gruppetto **3.45** Serie A **5.45** Isuzu UTE A-League **6.45** Premier League **8.15** Ally's Social Club **9.00** Fishing: On the Bank **10.00** Cyclocross **10.30** Cyclocross **11.00** Hard Knocks: In Season with the NFC East **12.00m't** A-League **1.00-6.00am** The Gallagher PREM

BEST OF THE REST – LIVE SPORT

7.35pm LIVE **EFL** Leicester City v Derby County (kick-off 7.45pm). (Sky Sports +)

12.30am LIVE **NBA Basketball** San Antonio Spurs v Cleveland Cavaliers. (Sky Sports +)

3.30-6.00am LIVE **NBA Basketball** Portland Trail Blazers v Dallas Mavericks. (Sky Sports +)

1.00-4.30am LIVE **NFL** Atlanta Falcons v Los Angeles Rams (kick-off 1.15am). (Sky Sports NFL)

Entertainment & Factual

ITV3 Freeview 10

6.00am Never the Twain **7.00** On the Buses **8.05** Lewis **10.05** Agatha Christie's Marple **12.05pm** The Darling Buds of May **2.20** On the Buses **2.55** FILM On the Buses (1971/PG) Comedy, starring Reg Varney. ★★ **4.35** FILM Carry On Cleo (1964/PG) Comedy, starring Sid James and Amanda Barrie. ★★★★ **6.25** Agatha Christie's Marple **8.30** Vera **10.30** Midsomer Murders **2.15am** The Larkins **3.55** Never the Twain **4.50** On the Buses **5.15-6.00am** Unwind with ITV

ITV4 Freeview 26

6.00am The Best of the 70s **6.20** Motorsport Mundial **6.50** Sharpe **1.30pm** LIVE ITV Racing: From Newbury. Coverage from Newbury, Doncaster and Kelso. **4.00** The Best of the 90s **4.15** Made in Britain **4.45** FILM Smokey and the Bandit II (1980/PG) Road comedy, starring Burt Reynolds. ★★ **6.50** FILM Guns of the Magnificent Seven (1969/PG) The gunslingers set out to save a Mexican revolutionary leader from a military prison. Second sequel to the Western, starring George Kennedy, Joe Don Baker and Monte Markham. ★★ **9.00** FILM Jack Reacher (2012/15) A former military police investigator takes on the case of a random shooting for which an army sniper has been framed. Action thriller, with Tom Cruise and Rosamund Pike. ★★★★ **11.35** FILM Snowpiercer (2013/15) In a snow-ravaged world, travellers fight for survival on a train that perpetually circumnavigates the globe. Fantasy thriller, starring Chris Evans. ★★★★ **1.55** Startup. Rask slides into a pit of violence and corruption in a fight for control. **2.55** The Offer. Ruddy leaves to help Evans as problems arise with production and Sicily. **4.05** British Rally Championship Season Review **5.00-6.00am** Unwind with ITV

5STAR Freeview 32

8.00am Nightmare Tenants, Slum Landlords **1.00pm** Call the Bailiffs: Time to Pay Up **7.00** GPs: Behind Closed Doors **8.00** Casualty 24/7: Every Second Counts **9.00** Kate **10.35** Five Days That Brought Down Andrew **12.05am** A Killer Makes a Call **1.05** The Good Wife **3.35-4.00am** Motorway Patrol

REALLY Freeview 17

6.00am Fantasy Homes by the Sea **7.00** Cruise TV with LoveitBookit **8.00** Celebrity Yorkshire Auction House **1.00pm** Antiques Road Trip **6.00** The Repair Shop **7.00** Antiques Road Trip **8.00** The Yorkshire Auction House. Angus helps a lady sell her parents' belongings and finds treasure with a rare military map. **9.00** Angus Ashworth: Yorkshire Heritage Hero. Angus scours a stately home for items that can be sold to help fund an ambitious renovation. **10.00** Long Lost Family **12.00m't** Help! My House Is Haunted **1.00** Celebrity Help! My House Is Haunted **2.00** Teleshopping **4.00-6.00am** Salvage Hunters

5ACTION Freeview 33

9.00am Entertainment News on 5 **9.15** Ice Road Truckers **10.10** FILM McLintock! (1963/U) Comedy Western, starring John Wayne. ★★★ **12.50pm** FILM War of the Wildcats (1943/U) Western, starring John Wayne. ★★ **3.00** FILM The Alamo (1960/PG) Western, directed by and starring John Wayne. ★★★★ **6.20** FILM The Cowboys (1972/PG) An ageing rancher finds himself short-handed for a 400-mile cattle drive, so reluctantly recruits a group of schoolboys for the job. Western, with John Wayne and Roscoe Lee Browne. ★★★ **9.00** FILM High Plains Drifter (1973/18) A mysterious stranger rids a town of outlaws, but has a dark plan in store for its inhabitants. Western, directed by and starring Clint Eastwood. With Verna Bloom and Marianna Hill. ★★★★ **11.10** FILM The Outlaw Josey Wales (1976/18) A Civil War veteran crossing America in search of sanctuary attracts a strange assortment of fellow travellers. Western, directed by and starring Clint Eastwood. ★★★★★ **2.00** World's Deadliest Weather: Caught on Camera **3.00-4.00am** Fights, Camera, Action!

Live EFL
Sky Sports Main Event, 5.30pm
Sindre Egeli (left) was on target for Ipswich Town to beat promotion rivals Coventry City 3-0 at home earlier this month. Can they repeat the feat at the Coventry Building Society Arena tonight?

SKY ARTS Freeview 36

6.00am Classic FM Live – Great British Classics **8.00** The Joy of Painting **9.00** Tales of the Unexpected **10.00** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **11.00** FILM Paris When It Sizzles (1964/PG) Romantic comedy, starring William Holden and Audrey Hepburn. ★★★★ **1.10pm** FILM Les Miserables – The Staged Concert (2019/12) A stage recording of the musical based on Victor Hugo's novel. ★★★★★ **4.00** FILM Situation Hopeless – But Not Serious (1965/PG) Comedy, starring Alec Guinness and Robert Redford. ★★★ **5.55** Stories from Tate Britain **6.55** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **7.30** Nicola Benedetti & Friends **9.00** Classic FM Live: 25th Anniversary Concert **11.20** Electric Light Orchestra: Live – The Early Years **12.20am** ELO Live at Wembley 1978 **1.40** Electric Light Orchestra: Discovery **2.40** Isle of Wight Festival 2025 **4.40** Discovering: Peter Gabriel **5.10-6.00am** The Art of Architecture

U&GOLD

7.15am Only Fools and Horses **10.20** Only Fools and Horses Christmas Special **11.00** Only Fools and Horses **5.00pm** Only Fools and Horses Christmas Special **5.40** Only Fools and Horses **11.40** Not Going Out **12.20am** Only Fools and Horses Christmas Special **1.00** Only Fools and Horses **2.30** Not Going Out **3.00-4.00am** The Cockfields

U&YESTERDAY Freeview 27

6.10am Great Coastal Railway Journeys **8.00** Bangers & Cash **10.00** The World at War **1.00pm** Bangers & Cash **3.00** Planet Earth **4.00** Planet Earth II **6.00** Red Dwarf **8.00** Mediterranean with Simon Reeve. Simon explores Cyprus, Lebanon, Israel and Gaza. **9.00** Frozen Planet **10.00** Bangers & Cash **2.00-3.00am** Planet Earth II

U&ALIBI

7.15am Murdoch Mysteries **9.00** Death in Paradise **6.20pm** Return to Paradise. A man is killed shortly after advising Mackenzie that many lives are in danger. **7.40** Death in Paradise **3.15-4.00am** Murdoch Mysteries

SKY MAX

6.00am Flintoff: From Lord's to the Ring **7.00** Agatha Raisin **1.00pm** Movie Megastars: Made in the 80s **3.00** The Paper **9.00** FILM Timecop (1994/15) A federal agent goes back in time to track down a corrupt politician who has the power to manipulate history. Sci-fi adventure, starring Jean-Claude Van Damme and Ron Silver. ★★★ **11.00** TV's Greatest Game Shows **1.00am** The 80s: Cinema's Greatest Decade **2.00** Rob & Romesh vs Shakespeare. The duo prepare to perform in Romeo and Juliet at Shakespeare's Globe. **3.00** Rob Beckett's Smart TV **5.00-6.00am** Highway Patrol

SKY ATLANTIC

6.00-6.00am Game of Thrones: twenty-two back-to-back episodes of the drama

SKY WITNESS

6.00am Border Patrol **7.00** Nothing to Declare **9.00** Stop, Search, Seize **10.00** UK Border Force **11.00** A1: Britain's Longest Road **12.00noon** FBI **1.00** The Rookie **2.00** Caught on Dashcam **4.00** Nothing to Declare **7.00** Caught on Dashcam **9.00** Watson **11.00** Caught on Dashcam **12.00m't** The Rookie **1.00** FBI **2.00** FBI: Most Wanted. Three men impersonating ICE officers raid a church. **3.00** Caught on Dashcam **4.00** Stop, Search, Seize **5.00-6.00am** UK Border Force

SKY COMEDY

8.00am The Conners **12.00noon** Community **4.00** Will & Grace **9.00** Jack Dee: Small World **10.35** Romesh: Can't Knock the Hustle **12.05am** Brett Goldstein: The Second Best Night of Your Life **1.15** And Just Like That **3.50-5.00am** Curb Your Enthusiasm

DISCOVERY

6.00am Wheeler Dealers World Tour **7.00** Alaska: Homestead Rescue **9.00** Gold Divers **11.00** Kindig Customs **1.00pm** Deadliest Catch **3.00** The Last Woodsmen **6.00** Gold Rush **9.00** Alaskan Bush People **10.00** Salvage Dawgs **11.00** Expedition Unknown **12.00m't** Moonshiners **1.00** Alaskan Bush People **2.00** Expedition X **3.00-5.00am** Alaska: Homestead Rescue

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

8.00am Air Crash Investigation **10.00** Ice Road Rescue **12.00noon** Top Guns: The Next Generation **3.00** Car S.O.S **5.00** Construction Fails **6.00** Air Crash Investigation **8.00** Jaws @ 50: The Definitive Inside Story **9.55** Titanic: 25 Years Later with James Cameron **10.55** Destruction Decoded **11.55** Air Crash Investigation **1.55am** To Catch a Smuggler **2.25** Made in a Day **3.20** Food Factory **4.10** Exotic Animal ER: Double Dose **5.00-5.30am** Teleshopping

Radio

BBC RADIO 1

97.6-99.8MHz 6.00am Radio 1 Breakfast with Mylo and Rosie **10.00** Ore and Swarzy **2.00pm** Emil and Lauren **6.00** Radio 1's New Music Show with Jack Saunders **8.00** Radio 1's Future Artists with Sian Eleri **10.00** Radio 1's Power Down Playlist with Sian Eleri **11.00** Rock Show with Daniel P Carter **1.00am** BBC Introducing Rock on Radio 1 with Alyx Holcombe **2.00** Radio 1 Anthems **4.00** Radio 1 Dance Party Starters **5.00-6.00am** Radio 1 Pop Anthems

BBC RADIO 2

88-91MHz 6.30am The Mark Goodier Breakfast Show **9.30** Gary Davies **12.00noon** Jeremy Vine **2.00** Trevor Nelson **4.00** DJ Spoony **6.30** DJ Spoony's Half Wower **7.00** Radio 2 Piano Room **9.00** Radio 2 All Stars **10.00** Radio 2 Unwinds with Angela Griffin. Angela hosts a Silent Nights Unwinds Mix. **11.00** Radio 2 Unwinds with Angela Griffin **12.00m't** Ellie Brennan **2.30** One Hit Wonders with OJ Borg **3.00** Dance Sounds of the 90s with Vernon Kay **4.00-6.30am** Owain Wyn Evans

BBC RADIO 3

90.2-92.4MHz 6.30am Breakfast **9.30** Essential Classics **1.00pm** Classical Live **4.00** Composer of the Week: Icons of British Light Music **5.00** Words and Music **6.15** New Generation Artists **7.25** Proms at Christmas 2025 **9.15** The Lebrecht Interview **10.00** Night Tracks **11.30** 'Round Midnight **12.30-6.30am** Through the Night

CHOICE
Disordered
Radio 4, 2.15pm
Magnus Mackintosh's sitcom starring Jamie Sives as Hector, the optimistic but struggling 42-year-old single father living in Edinburgh, returns for a second series. Hector finds it hard having his acid-tongued ex-partner Amanda (Gail Watson) as a lodger – as does Susan (Rosalind Sydney).

BBC RADIO 4

FM 92.4-94.6MHz 6.00am Today **9.00** Start the Week **9.45** Wild Bond **10.00** Woman's Hour **11.00** What Happened to Progress? **11.45** Larkin Revisited **12.00noon** Archive on 4: Into the Sharkiverse **12.57** Weather **1.00** The World at One **1.45** An Almanac of Anxiety: In Search of a Calmer Mind **2.00** The Archers **2.15** Disordered **2.45** Faith, Hope and Glory **3.00** Great Lives **3.30** Curious Cases **4.00** Soul Music at 25 **5.00** PM **5.57** Weather **6.00** News **6.15** Ian Hislop's Oldest Jokes **6.30** The Unbelievable Truth **7.00** The Archers **7.15** Front Row **8.00** Archive on 4: The Cult of Lebowski **9.00** Start the Week **9.45** Wild Bond **10.00** The World Tonight **10.45** Book at Bedtime: A Long Winter **11.00** The Birth of Music **11.30** BBC National Short Story Award 2025 **12.00m't** News **12.15** Raising Hare **12.30** Larkin Revisited **12.48** Shipping Forecast **1.00** As BBC World Service **5.00** News Summary **5.04** From Our Own Correspondent **5.32** Weather **5.34** Shipping Forecast **5.43-5.45am** Prayer for the Day

BBC RADIO 5 LIVE

693/909kHz 6.00am 5 Live Breakfast **9.00** Adam Fleming **11.00** Leila Nathoo **2.00pm** Marianna Spring **4.00** 5 Live Drive **7.00** 5 Live Sport **10.00** Tony Livesey. Late-night conversation. **1.00-5.00am** Dotun Adebayo

BBC RADIO WALES

FM: 94.6MHz 6.00am Radio Wales News Update **6.05** Wake Up with Radio Wales **6.31** Radio Wales Arts Show **7.00** Radio Wales Breakfast **9.00** Sam Vaughan **12.00noon** Welsh Wonders **2.00** Justine Jones **5.00** Radio Wales Drive **6.30** Aled Jones: Still Walking in the Air. The success of the Christmas song. **7.00** Radio Wales Sport **10.00** Eleri Sion **12.00m't** Relax with Radio Wales **1.00-6.00am** As Radio 5 Live

CLASSIC FM

100-102MHz 6.30am Classic FM Breakfast with Tim Lihoreau **9.00** The Classic FM Hall of Fame Hour with Tim Lihoreau **10.00** Aled Jones **2.00pm** Margherita Taylor **6.00** John Brunning **10.00** Calm Classics **1.00am** Bill Overton **4.00-6.30am** Early Breakfast

ABSOLUTE RADIO

DAB 6.00am Jay Lawrence **10.00** Leona Graham **1.00pm** Claire Sturgess **4.00** Emil Franchi **7.00** Sarah Champion. Music and chat. **10.00** Tim Burgess's Listening Party **1.00-6.00am** Dan Noble

Movies

FILM4

11.00am The Borrowers (1997/U) Children's fantasy, starring John Goodman. ★★★

12.45pm The Muppets Take Manhattan (1984/U) Puppet comedy, starring Liza Minnelli and Joan Rivers. ★★★★

2.35 Evolution (2001/PG) Sci-fi comedy, starring David Duchovny. ★★★

4.40 The Day the Earth Stood Still (2008/12) Sci-fi remake, starring Keanu Reeves. ★★★

6.45 Fisherman's Friends: One and All (2022/12) Comedy sequel, starring James Purefoy and Sam Swainsbury. ★★★★

9.00 Deadpool 2 (2018/15) Action comedy, with Ryan Reynolds and Josh Brolin. ★★★★

11.20 Mission: Impossible – Fallout (2018/12) Action thriller sequel, starring Tom Cruise, Henry Cavill and Ving Rhames. ★★★★

2.10-4.00am Funny Pages (2022/18) Comedy, starring Daniel Zolghadri. ★★★

SKY CINEMA PREMIERE

6.00am Tinsel Town (2025/PG) Festive family comedy, starring Kiefer Sutherland. ★★★

7.40 A Minecraft Movie (2025/PG) See 4.35pm. ★★★★

9.25 The Phoenician Scheme (2025/15) See 1.10am. ★★★★

11.15 Sinners (2025/15) See 8.00pm. ★★★★

1.40pm Mission: Impossible – The Final Reckoning (2025/12) See 10.20pm. ★★★★

4.35 A Minecraft Movie (2025/PG) Fantasy adventure, starring Jason Momoa. ★★★★

6.20 Karate Kid: Legends (2025/12) Drama sequel, starring Jackie Chan. ★★★

8.00 Sinners (2025/15) Twin brothers return to their hometown, and find a dark force waiting to welcome them back. Horror thriller, starring Michael B Jordan. ★★★★

10.20 Mission: Impossible – The Final Reckoning (2025/12) Action thriller, starring Tom Cruise and Hayley Atwell. ★★★★

1.10am The Phoenician Scheme (2025/15) Wes Anderson's comedy, starring Benicio Del Toro and Mia Threapleton. ★★★★

3.05 The Alto Knights (2025/15) Drama, with Robert De Niro and Cosmo Jarvis. ★★★

5.15-6.00am Sky Cinema Preview-Dec 2025

SKY CINEMA DRAMA

5.50pm Valentine's Day (2010/12) Drama, with Ashton Kutcher and Jessica Alba. ★★★★

8.00 Erin Brockovich (2000/15) Fact-based drama, starring Julia Roberts. ★★★★

10.15 It Ends With Us (2024/15) Drama, with Blake Lively and Justin Baldoni. ★★★★

12.40am The Brutalist (2025/18) Drama, with Adrien Brody and Felicity Jones. ★★★★

4.40-6.50am Two Mules for Sister Sara (1970/15) Western, starring Clint Eastwood and Shirley MacLaine. ★★★★

SKY CINEMA HARRY POTTER

6.15pm Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1 (2010/12) Fantasy adventure, starring Daniel Radcliffe, Emma Watson, Rupert Grint and Ralph Fiennes. ★★★★

8.45 Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2 (2011/12) Conclusion of the fantasy saga, starring Daniel Radcliffe. ★★★★★

11.00 Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them (2016/12) Harry Potter prequel, starring Eddie Redmayne, Katherine Waterston, Colin Farrell and Samantha Morton. ★★★

1.15am Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald (2018/12) Fantasy adventure, starring Eddie Redmayne. ★★★★

3.40-6.10am Fantastic Beasts: The Secrets of Dumbledore (2022/12) Fantasy adventure, with Eddie Redmayne and Jude Law. ★★★

TALKING PICTURES TV

5.30pm Bonanza Western drama series.

7.00 The Footage Detectives Archive film.

8.00 The Racing Game Mystery thriller.

9.05 Gideon's Way Police drama series.

10.05 Echo of Barbara (1961/PG) Crime drama, starring Mervyn Johns. ★★★

11.20 Confessions of a Driving Instructor (1976/18) Bawdy comedy, starring Robin Askwith and Anthony Booth. ★★★

1.05am Up Pompeii (1971/15) Comedy based on the TV series, with Frankie Howerd. ★★

2.55 The Shakedown (1960/12) Thriller, with Terence Morgan and Hazel Court. ★★★

5.25-6.00am The Life and Legend of Wyatt Earp Biopic, starring Hugh O'Brian.

GREAT! MYSTERY

5.00pm Murder, She Wrote Jessica investigates an old murder case.

6.00 Sue Thomas: FBEye Crime drama.

7.00 Castle American crime drama.

8.00 Unforgettable Crime drama.

9.00 An Aurora Teagarden Mystery: Something New (2023/U) Whodunit, starring Skyler Samuels and Marilu Henner. ★★★

10.55 Castle American crime drama.

11.55 Unforgettable Crime drama.

12.55am A Lover Betrayed (2017/12) Thriller, with Jamie Luner and Jason Brooks. ★★★

2.30 A Teacher's Obsession (2015/PG) Thriller, starring Molly Hagan and Boti Bliss. ★★★

3.50-6.00am The Ex Next Door (2019/PG) Thriller, starring Alicia Ziegler. ★★★

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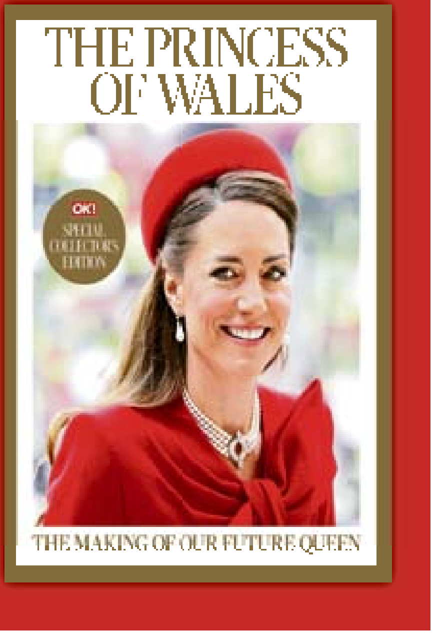

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UNDERGROUND

Letters

Edited by GREG MORGAN

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LETTER OF THE DAY

PREACHY: The Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally

Why doesn't fatcat C of E help illegals?

WE HAD a lecture from the future Archbishop of Canterbury. I was expecting it would be about the birth of Jesus with readings from the Bible as all Christians celebrate the real meaning of Christmas.

However Bishop of London Sarah Mullally decided to tell us that immigration is dividing us and feels this isn't right ("Bishop's call for unity on immigration", December 26).

We are now swamped with thousands of illegal migrants who we know nothing about, some who commit crimes.

The Church of England is one of the richest landowners. How many migrants has it housed? And will a loophole be found for it to avoid paying mansion tax? We will see.

Julie Perkin,
Bristol

A family Christmas spirit that's always on the cards

I WAS listening to A Festival Of Nine Lessons And Carols from King's College, Cambridge. It is our family tradition and sets us up nicely for Christmas.

As I listened, I looked at the Christmas cards we received and I realised that the majority of them are from friends who were originally born in another country and have lived and worked in the UK for many years, and their faith covers all the major religions.

All of them are the most beautiful and caring souls that ever walked the face of this earth, and I'm so blessed that they call me their friend.

May we all live in peace, in the spirit of Christmas.

Tricia Levack,
Kirkcaldy, Fife

Another Labour U-turn when the pressure is on

HERE we go again with yet another Government U-turn ("Fight goes on to completely scrap farm raid", December 24). From the winter fuel allowance cuts, benefits reform, income tax rises, Waspi women payments and now inheritance tax, the process is always the same – rush though ill-thought-out measures, then under pressure water down or scrap them.

Any sensible Chancellor would have imposed the tax only on farms sold for non-agricultural use, not on the residual land value on death.

Roy Daniels,
Kingsclere, Hants

Child benefit limit would cap off a difficult year

NOW that the Government has had a rethink on farm inheritance tax, perhaps it can have another one on child benefit and cap them at three instead of no cap at all. I can't imagine many people wanting more than three and if they do, why should I help to pay for them? They could save a bit of money too ("'It's bankrupting Britain'... Reeves borrowed £132bn", December 20).

Bob Edge,
Horwich, Lancs

True transparency is way more important than cash

CAPPING political donations is not a panacea for restoring voter confidence. It is a misguided approach that distracts from real accountability issues within our political system ("Kemi shrugs off record £9m donation to Reform", December 5).

As Margaret Thatcher famously stated, "The problem with socialism is that eventually you run out of other people's money." Instead of limiting support, let's push for transparency and integrity in our political process – ensuring that our leaders are truly accountable to the people they serve.

Alastair Majury,
Dunblane, Perth

Patience flags over lefty bid to thwart democracy

THE British people have had enough and are in revolt against the progressive left elites. They have raised flags this year in towns and cities across the UK in the name of something that rises above elite identity politics, the populist desire to take back control is not going away anytime soon.

That's why this Government wants to cancel the threat at next year's local elections.

Mark Twiddy,
Forest Gate, Gtr London

The Monster Raving Green Party and joker Polanski

SUPPORTERS of the Greens should take a step back and seriously consider what the difference is between their party and the now defunct Monster Raving Loony Party ("Fury as Zack Polanski demands Brits pay millions to make migrants more comfortable", December 24).

The latest suggestion by Zack Polanski that we should contribute £500million to ease the discomfort of those waiting to cross the Channel illegally is beyond belief. What planet does he live on?

At a time when the elderly are struggling to feed themselves and stay warm he prefers to ignore their plight and encourage flooding the country with scroungers and opportunists. Anybody voting for Polanski and his Green Party should seriously now question their own intelligence.

Brian Banks,
Ormskirk, Lancs

Tragic deaths show why supercars need licence

SAD to read another successful person, Vince Zampella, has been killed along with his passenger because he was able buy a supercar that really requires at the very least a qualified driver behind the wheel ("Fireball kills Call of Duty mastermind", December 24).

Cars that can exceed 150mph should require at the very least advanced drivers licensed to be in control and even tested on a track to ensure you can control it, just as motorcycles require riders to be tested for higher powered bikes.

Lorry drivers require certain licences to operate larger, more powerful machines.

Most, if not all, of these high powered car accidents result from inexperienced drivers.

John Fox,
St Brelade, Jersey

Migrant invasion should be recognised as a crime

AS ALGERIA declares the colonisation by France a crime, can we declare the colonisation of the United Kingdom by Muslim illegal migrants a crime?

And to save us the trouble of asking each criminal for reparation, can we simply deport them, to save us the trouble?

This talk of colonisation and reparation is nonsense. Unless you're Ukraine.

How far should we go back? Shall we ask the Vikings for reparation? Or the Romans?

The whole thing is ridiculous.

Brett Trafford,
Vyne Park, Hants

Even our King was tied up in knots over lopsided look

WATCHING men on television, one wonders why the art of a Windsor knot in a necktie seems to be disregarded in favour of the schoolboy lopsided knot.

Even the King had a schoolboy knot when he made his Christmas Day speech. Gone are the days when the smart Windsor knot was the art of making a collar and tie look the part.

I am close to 90 years old and would not dream of going out in collar and tie without a smart Windsor knot.

Come on, you men, smarten up. It will make a difference.

Donald Wiseman,
Norwich

£125M ISAK FEE ADDS INSULT TO SERIOUS INJURY FOR LIVERPOOL

NO PROFESSIONAL footballer can help getting injured and not able to play for months.

However the latest injury to Liverpool's record signing Alexander Isak, especially following his controversial exit from Newcastle and his subsequent loss of form, must be a real kick in the teeth for a club to have paid a British record of £125million ("A tough break for Isak", December 23).

Some uncharitable people say Liverpool FC deserve it for playing along with the way Isak went about demanding to leave Newcastle.

Alan Ogden,
Gomersal, W Yorks

TODAY: Monday December 29, 2025

ON THIS DAY

SAIL TO FRANCE FOR JUST £1
DAILY EXPRESS
Alan Bates loses his brave battle against cancer
Why you need a New Year mental detox
GRIEF
SHOT COP'S WIDOW AT SCENE OF DEATH

22 years ago (2003)

Our front page reported that the widow of PC Ian Broadhurst had visited the scene in Leeds of his murder by US fugitive David Bieber.

In other news, we revealed that plain-clothes armed sky marshals would fly on UK passenger planes for the first time, including on some US flights.

The guards were part of a package of measures to deter terrorists in the wake of 9/11 and the Iraq War.

88 years ago (1937)

The new constitution of a fully independent Ireland came into effect, replacing the 1922 Constitution of the Irish Free State.

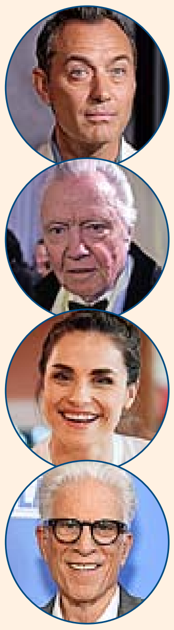
This created the new office of president and established Phoenix Park in Dublin as the president's official residence.

50 years ago (1975)

At the end of International Women's Year, the Sex Discrimination Act guaranteed UK women's right to equal pay and status in the workplace and society.

The Equal Opportunities Commission was established to promote gender equality and issued guidelines to discourage advertisers from showing women in stereotypical roles. Despite the law, the gender pay gap is still around 7.7%.

BIRTHDAYS



Fantastic Beasts actor **Jude Law** is 53. He was named after The Beatles' hit Hey Jude. Midnight Cowboy star **Jon Voight** is 87. He's a Trump supporter. DCI Banks actress **Charlotte Riley** turns 44. She's wed to Tom Hardy. Former Cheers star **Ted Danson** is 78. He campaigns for the environment.

TODAY'S GIGGLE

Which athlete is warmest in winter? A long jumper.

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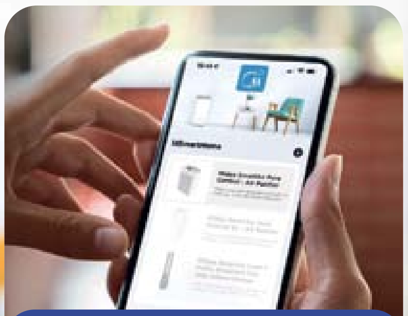

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WHY CLEAN AIR MATTERS

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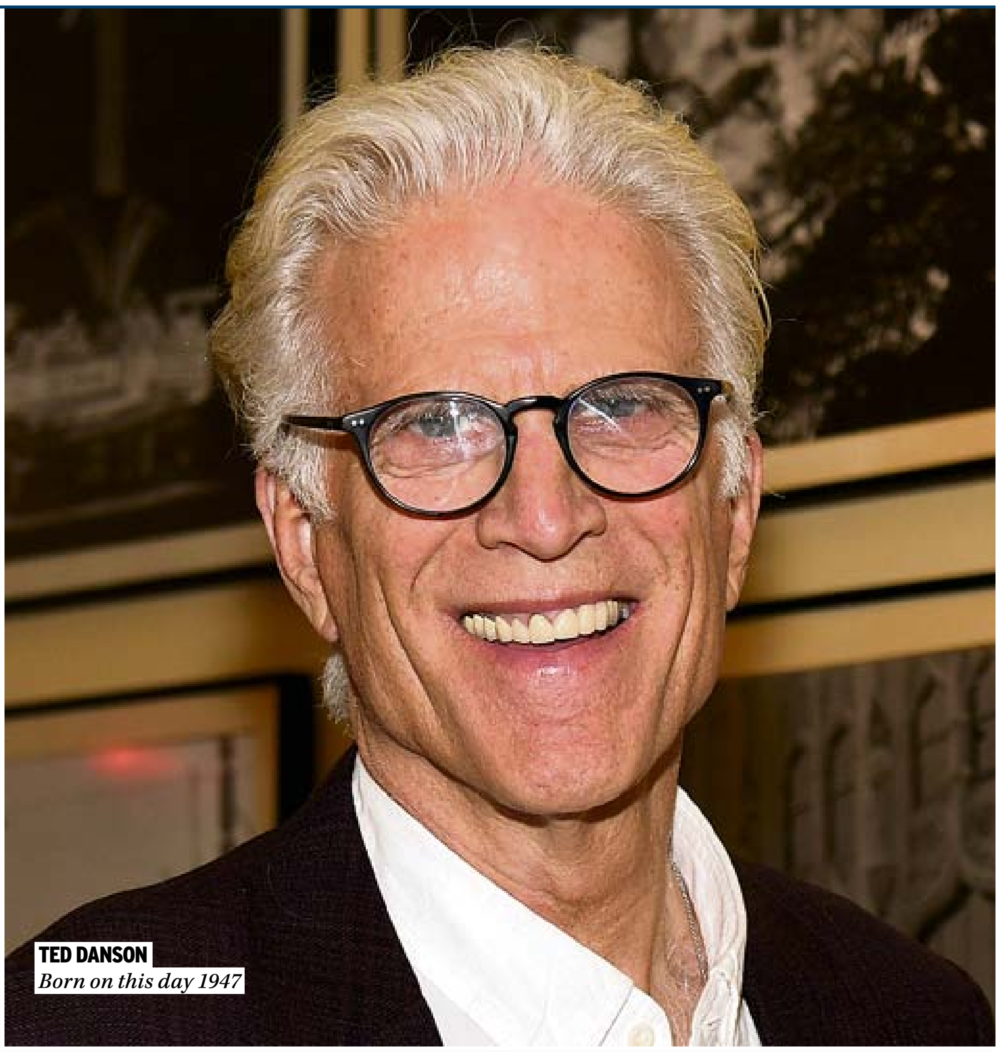

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Born on this day 1947

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 20

Advancements have been made in a number of areas of your life. Although some things have taken longer to develop than you had anticipated, you have overcome many hurdles and you should be feeling pleased with your achievements. Spend time and have fun experimenting with any new ideas, hobbies and pastimes.

For more call **0905 789 4171**
(80p/min + network access charge)

TAURUS APRIL 21-MAY 21

You will see some surprise treats, gifts or a money offer coming your way, and of course, you aren't likely to mind this at all. In fact, you could even find yourself laughing all the way to the bank. A partner or housemate will be receiving a bonus or making more money too, so everything seems to be looking good right now.

For more call **0905 789 4172**
(80p/min + network access charge)

GEMINI MAY 22-JUNE 21

Legal and property issues will bring some confusion to the proceedings but if you stay calm and composed, these will all be quickly resolved. A personal matter will need some extra attention and there will be help available, should you be in need of it. You will be invited to take part in a special community event this evening.

For more call **0905 789 4173**
(80p/min + network access charge)

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 23

An older relative seems to be viewing everything through a negative lens, and you're getting tired of the way they see everything from the black side. You are trying to lift everyone's spirits but that isn't easy when a moody person is spoiling it for everyone else. A local incident will be the start of a public controversy.

For more call **0905 789 4174**
(80p/min + network access charge)

LEO JULY 24-AUG 23

You find yourself in a situation where it feels like you're taking two steps forward and one step back all the time. Even though it feels more and more tempting to throw in the towel, keep pushing through. You will be glad that you persevered if you can get a difficult job finished by the end of the day. Keep going to see results.

For more call **0905 789 4175**
(80p/min + network access charge)

VIRGO AUG 24-SEPT 23

An old family photograph or a note that is found in a book you are reading will evoke memories of a friend who lives overseas. You had of course meant to get in touch with them earlier but other things sadly got in the way. Take this chance to reach out to them while they are on your mind. You certainly won't regret it.

For more call **0905 789 4176**
(80p/min + network access charge)

LIBRA SEPT 24-OCT 23

Watch how you're spending at the moment. You're feeling tempted to splash out on a few trendy home gadgets but they could turn out to be more complex or less useful than the salesperson or advertisements suggest. There is gossip in the air this evening too. Make sure you don't take everything you hear at face value.

For more call **0905 789 4177**
(80p/min + network access charge)

SCORPIO OCT 24-NOV 22

With so many demands being made on you in the workplace and in any volunteer groups you belong to, you're struggling to find time for pressing household matters. Work issues are taking far longer than you had expected to complete. If you do manage to take part in any family activities, you will definitely enjoy them.

For more call **0905 789 4178**
(80p/min + network access charge)

SAGITTARIUS NOV 23-DEC 21

A series of seemingly unrelated events will be the reason for a strange incident that takes place now. A friend or workmate has been behaving erratically and now that you have found out the reason why, your compassionate response will help restore normality. An interview will go well if you're willing to sing your own praises.

For more call **0905 789 4179**
(80p/min + network access charge)

CAPRICORN DEC 22-JAN 20

It is unusual for you to act so swiftly on something but if you feel action needs taking, you will roll up your sleeves and quickly get on with it. Friends and workmates will struggle to match your speed or they just won't be in the mood to think about it and respond as quickly. You're happy to get on alone, you will get more done that way.

For more call **0905 789 4180**
(80p/min + network access charge)

AQUARIUS JAN 21-FEB 19

Someone will ask you to keep a secret. It will be hard to resist the urge to spill the beans to someone, in which case, try to steer clear of long online conversations and situations that might lead to a deeper discussion. If a boss or senior colleague seems inquisitive, you don't want to reveal more than you intend to.

For more call **0905 789 4181**
(80p/min + network access charge)

PISCES FEB 20-MARCH 20

You are intrigued by an offer someone puts to you but would you regret letting them convince you to take part in a risky venture? Whether it concerns finances or feelings, business or friendship, it would be best to be cautious and keep everything open and honest. Be patient if you're trying something for the first time.

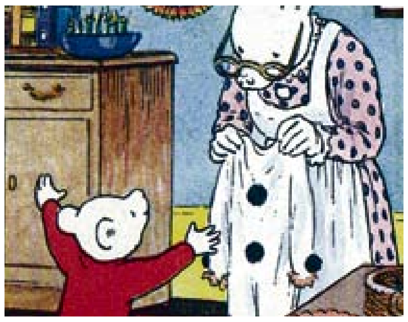
For more call **0905 789 4182**
(80p/min + network access charge)

Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge - maximum of 5 minutes duration. You must be over 18 and have the bill payer's permission. Service provider Spoke. Helpline 0333 202 3390

NUTWOOD TALES

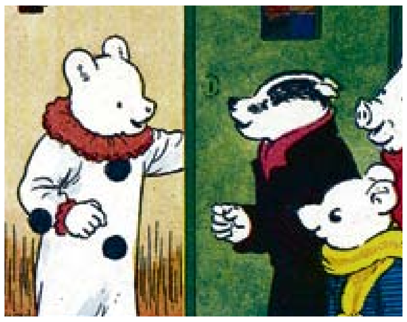
To order a copy of the Rupert Annual 2024 (£10.99) visit www.expressbookshop.com or call Express Bookshop on 020 3176 3832. Free UK P&P on online orders over £25.

RUPERT AND THE COUGH DROP No.39



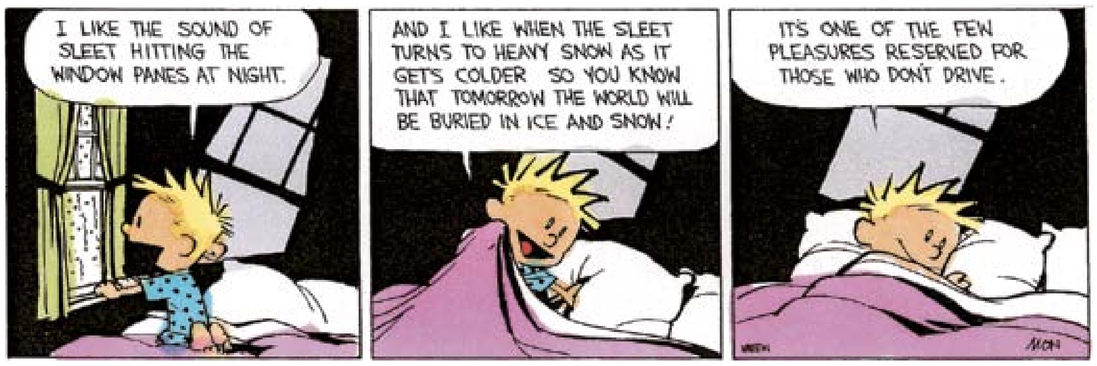
Says Mrs Bear, "I've found some stuff
And made your pierrot suit and ruff."

On party night he looks most gay
When all his friends arrive to play.

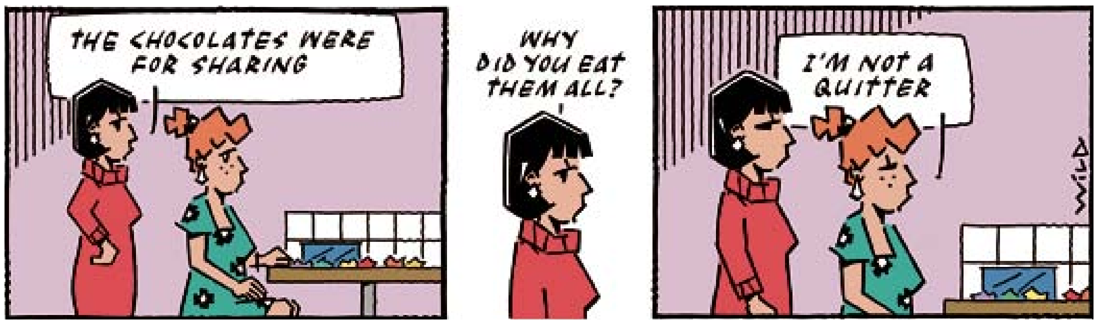


Rupert cannot believe that his visit to Santa Claus was a dream. "We must wait and see," says Mrs Bear. "Meanwhile, look what I've made for you to wear at your party." She shows him a little pierrot suit with a large frill and black pompoms. "How lovely!" he cries. On the evening of his party he wears the costume when opening the door to his pals. "I've a story for you," he laughs, "and especially for Podgy."

CALVIN AND HOBBES
BILL WATTERSON


I LIKE THE SOUND OF SLEET HITTING THE WINDOW PANES AT NIGHT.
AND I LIKE WHEN THE SLEET TURNS TO HEAVY SNOW AS IT GETS COLDER SO YOU KNOW THAT TOMORROW THE WORLD WILL BE BURIED IN ICE AND SNOW!
IT'S ONE OF THE FEW PLEASURES RESERVED FOR THOSE WHO DON'T DRIVE.

FAITH, HOPE AND SUE
LISA WILD


THE CHOCOLATES WERE FOR SHARING
WHY DID YOU EAT THEM ALL?
I'M NOT A QUITTER
WILD

Reader Offer in partnership with **Yimbly.com**

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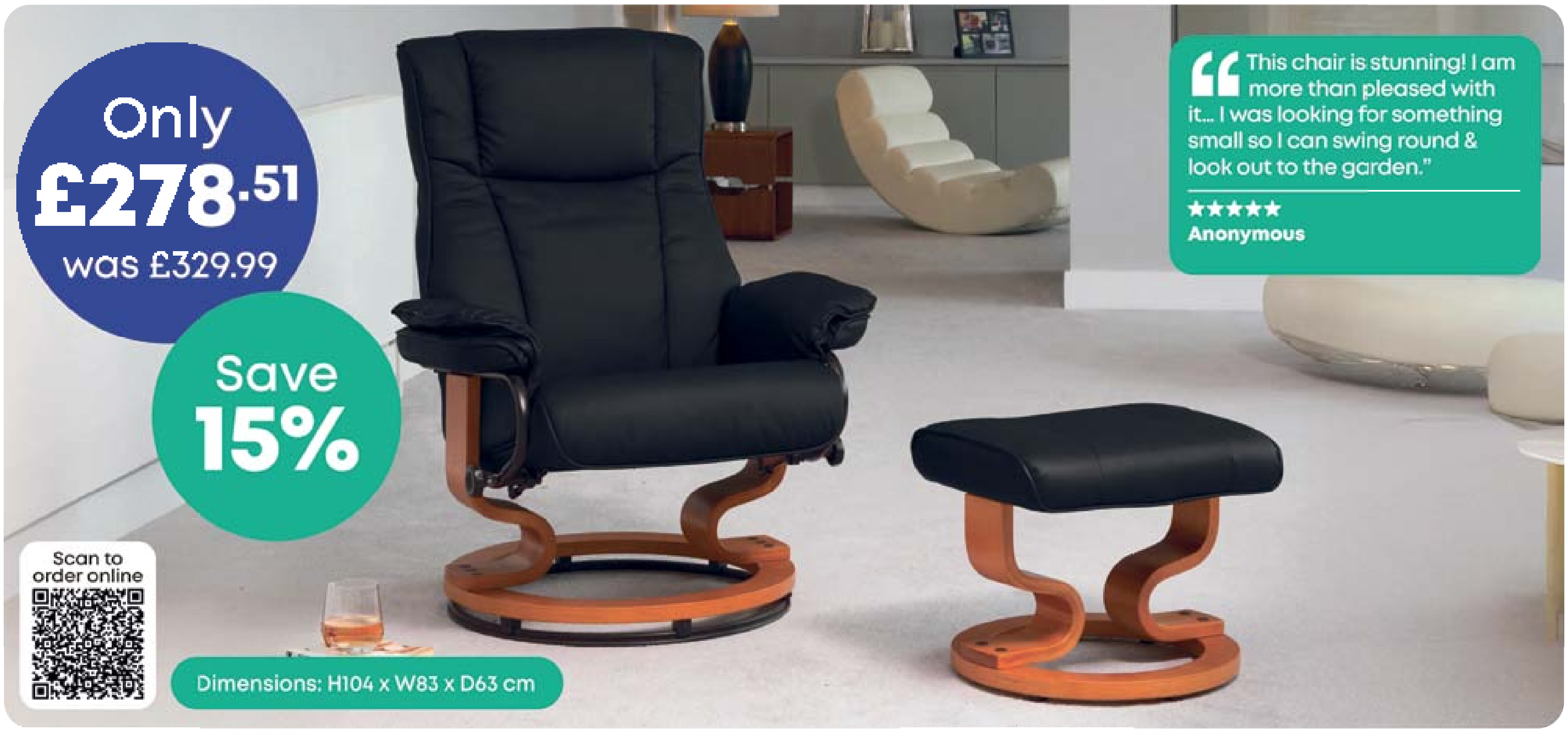

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Save **15%**

“This chair is stunning! I am more than pleased with it... I was looking for something small so I can swing round & look out to the garden.”

★★★★★
Anonymous

Scan to order online

Dimensions: H104 x W83 x D63 cm

Whether you’re settling in for an evening of television or giving your back a well-earned rest, having a supportive chair makes all the difference. The Calhoun Swivel Recliner combines spacious, cushioned seating with massage points across the seat, upper back, and lower back, while a gentle lumbar heat function delivers targeted comfort exactly where it’s needed. Together, these features create a seating experience that feels both soothing and genuinely restorative.

ADAPTIVE POSITIONING FOR EVERYDAY USE

Complete with a matching footstool, the chair sits on a stable wooden base and is upholstered in soft, durable bonded leather. Its swivel mechanism, operated via a discreet ring beneath the base, allows effortless movement when adjusting your position or reaching for nearby items. The body-responsive recline lets you ease back smoothly and settle into a comfortable angle, and once you’ve found the position that feels right, the under-chair handle locks it securely in place, ensuring consistent support.

TARGETED COMFORT WHERE YOU NEED IT

The integrated massage points and lumbar heat function provide gentle, focused relief for the back, helping ease tension after long periods of standing, working, or sitting at a desk. These features make the chair ideal for reading, watching television, or enjoying quiet breaks throughout the day when you need a moment to take the pressure off.

COMFORT THAT FITS A VARIETY OF SPACES

With a versatile and inviting design, the Calhoun fits comfortably into living rooms, bedrooms, home offices, or a quiet corner you’d like to turn into a personal retreat. The footstool allows you to elevate your legs and stretch out fully, enhancing comfort, supporting posture, and creating a welcoming place to unwind whenever you need it.

A practical, well-crafted companion for everyday life, the Calhoun provides a refined seating experience where comfort and relief come effortlessly.

Available in 5 colours:

● Cream
● Brown
● Burgundy
● Grey
● Black

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- ✓ Warming heat function
- ✓ Massage points in seat, lower and upper back
- ✓ Supplied with matching footstool

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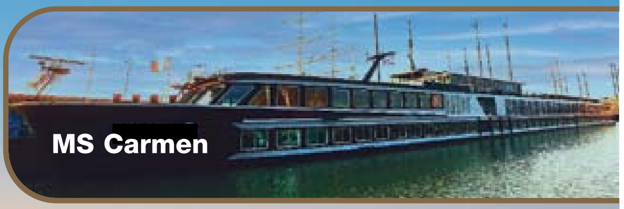

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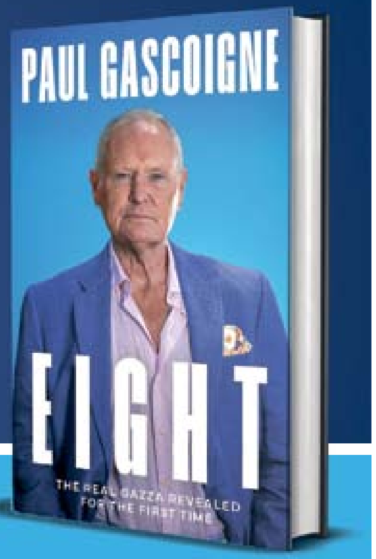

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Racing

William HILL

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GUN FOR BRENN

Pauling and Jones to score big again at Newbury

By **The Scout** (Melissa Jones)

KALKBRENNER (3.30) is fancied to be another Christmas cracker for his trainer and jockey in the Grade One Coral Challow Novices' Hurdle.

Ben Pauling and Ben Jones hit a new high with The Jukebox Man in Kempton's King George VI Chase on Boxing Day and kept the momentum up with Wayward Lad Novices' Chase hero Mambonumberfive.

Now the pair take aim at hot favourite **No Drama This End** – an easy winner of his two hurdling starts.

This might come quick enough for the Paul Nicholls-trained favourite and he has only been seen on a good to soft playing surface once. Kalkbrenner did too much too soon over course and distance a month ago, but he battled on bravely before finding **Klimt Madrik** a touch too strong.

My selection beat that rival previously at Ffos Las, form that has been franked and if settling better, he can show his real ability here at double-figure odds.

Jones has another top opportunity riding **NEWTON TORNADO** (3.35), who has untapped potential for the Coral 'Pipped-At-The Post' Payouts Novices' Limited Handicap Chase.

Champion jockey Sean Bowen gets the leg up on **SCORPIO RISING** (2.22), who bids for a hat-trick in the Join Coral 'Bet 10 Get 50' Handicap Hurdle.

The grey met Lingfield's final flight with his ears pricked 41 days ago – a sign he had more in the tank – before galloping to a four-and-a-quarter length supremacy.

The fourth and fifth have scored since, and Scorpio Rising is fancied to defy an 8lb rise in a deeper event.

MINELLA BLUEWAY (1.50) is an each-way pick for the eight-runner Coral Mandarin Handicap Chase over 3m 2f.

The seven-year-old dropped off the pace when last seen at Chepstow, before running on again for third and this is his chance to take advantage of carrying just 10st 8lb. At Leopardstown, the Willie Mullins-trained and Rich Ricci-owned **LOSSIEMOUTH** (2.32) is the class act in the Grade One December Hurdle.

The handler sends two over to Doncaster for the Listed Sky Sports Racing Yorkshire Silver Vase Mares' Chase, but past Clousutton inmate **PAGGANE** (2.10) is on a roll for training rookie Faye Bramley.

A positive ride could see **SPIKE JONES** (2.45) thwart patiently ridden pair **Rockola Vogue** and **JJ Moon** in the Download The At The Races App Handicap Hurdle, while **BARATABLET** (3.15) looks a level above Kelso's Chas Handicap Hurdle.

PUNTERS' KAL
Kalkbrenner is worth following at a big price in the Challow Hurdle

NEWBURY SKYSPORTSRACING

THE SCOUT

12.05 White Noise
12.40 Act Of Innocence
1.15 Old Cowboy
1.50 Minella Blueway
2.22 Scorpio Rising
3.00 Kalkbrenner
3.35 Newton Tornado

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Premier Raceday

12.05 MARES' HANDICAP HURDLE
£10,562 (Class 3)2m 69yds (8 declared)

1	7-4L142	**ARCLIGHT (105) (D)** N Henderson 6 12-0	**N De Boinville**	120
2	12P25-1	**RULA BULA (57)** J & A O'Neill 6 12-0	**Jonjo O'Neill Jr**	122
3	51F6-21	**MISS ALTEA BLUE (32) (D)** P Nicholls 4 11-10	**H Cobden**	118
4	23-11	● **WHITE NOISE (46) (D)** K Bailey & M Nicholls 5 11-9	**T Bellamy**	121
5	198-771	**TOUR OVALIE (26) (C&D)** E Williams 6 11-8	**I Williams**	124
6	4/9710-4	**LAGERTHA (72) (D)** Katy Price 5 11-3	**G Sheehan**	115
7	68-127	**GOLDEN FALLS (31)** L Wadham 3 10-8	**S Bowen**	101
8	441223	**GRAECIA (22) (D)** C Longsdon 4 10-2	**D McConville(7)**	★125

TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 3, 4, 8 HOOD: Nos. 7, 8.
SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 1, 7, 6, 2, 5.

SP FORECAST: 9-4 White Noise, 4 Rula Bula, 9-2 Miss Altea Blue, 5 Arclight, 6 Tour Ovalie, 12 Graecia, 20 Golden Falls, 25 Lagertha.

2024: Tour Ovalie 5-10-13, Isabel Williams(3) 11-2 (E Williams), 10 ran.

12.40 CORAL 'INTRODUCTORY' HURDLE
£9,258 (3) 2m 69yds (8)

1	341-1	● **ACT OF INNOCENCE (31) (C&D,F)** N Henderson 5 11-12	**N De Boinville**	★128
2	1/204-	**BLUES SINGER (310)** A King 5 11-7	**T Bellamy**	118
3	4	**GULF COAST HIGHWAY (136)** N Mulholland 4 11-7	**B Harris(3)**	–
4	5L	**LHEUR DE GLOIRE (30)** B Pauling 4 11-7	**B R Jones**	98
5	5	**MAJOR MAJOR (28)** Cynthia Woods 5 11-7	**F Mitchell(3)**	90
6	8	**MORRADI (18)** D Pipe 4 11-7	**J Tudor**	79
7	3	**RAZORS EDGE (38)** D Skelton 5 11-7	**H Skelton**	105
8	1	**MINELLA YOGA (55)** P Nicholls 3 10-6	**H Cobden**	110

TONGUE STRAP: No. 7.
SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 1.

SP FORECAST: 10-11 Act Of Innocence, 5-2 Minella Yoga, 6 Blues Singer, 8 Razors Edge, 20 Gulf Coast Highway, 50 Morradi, Lheur De Gloire, 100 Major Major.

2024: Peso 5-11-7, Jonjo O'Neill Jr 18-1 (J & A O'Neill), 11 ran.

1.15 CORAL RACING CLUB HANDICAP CHASE
£11,618 (3) 2m 92yds (6)

1	5/117-35	**PLEASINGTON (23)** O Murphy 7 12-0	**S Bowen**	★131
2	2/L1F-P6	**JOKER DE MAI (16) (D)** C Boultbee-Brooks 6 11-11	**R Patrick**	129
3	111211	**JOREBEL (28) (D)** C Gordon 6 11-7	**F Gordon**	130
4	211/16-8	**RATH GAUL HILL (30) (C&D)** S Drinkwater 7 11-7	**S Twiston-Davies**	128
5	3L132-3	● **OLD COWBOY (18)** G & J Moore 5 11-7	**F Mitchell(3)**	125
6	222F-L2	**MON CHAMPION (24)** P Nicholls 5 11-1	**H Cobden**	121

TONGUE STRAP: No. 4 CHEEK PIECES: No. 4.
SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 2, 3, 6, 1, 4.

SP FORECAST: 13-8 Jorebel, 4 Pleasington, Mon Champion, 6 Old Cowboy, 8 Joker De Mai, 10 Rath Gaul Hill.

2024: The Famous Five 6-11-6, Charlie Deutsch 2-1 Fav (V Williams), 5 ran.

1.50 CORAL MANDARIN HANDICAP CHASE ITV4
£26,015 (2) 3m 1f 214yds (9)

1	64172/0	**ANNUAL INVICTUS (30)** C Gordon 10 12-0	**F Gordon**	122
2	111P-04	**KING'S THRESHOLD (30) (C)** E Lavelle 8 11-5	**B R Jones**	★145
3	PP/P-313	**ONLY THE BOLD (50) (D)** J Snowden 10 11-4	**G Sheehan**	142
4	11P/3P-P	**BRAVE KINGDOM (30) (C)** P Nicholls 9 11-2	**H Cobden**	137
5	2253/30-	**GERICAULT ROQUE (293)** D Pipe 9 11-2	**Doubtful**	144
6	1P/L4-4P	**HOLD THAT TAUGHT (30) (D)** V Williams 10 10-8	**C Deutsch**	129
7	2711-P3	● **MINELLA BLUEWAY (23)** E Williams 7 10-8	**I Williams**	142
8	L312-33	**RIVERS CORNER (23) (C)** J Tizzard 7 10-6	**B J Powell**	143
9	2PL-0P4	**IDEAL DES BORDES (24) (F)** N Henderson 7 10-5	**N De Boinville**	129

BLINKERS: Nos. 8, 9 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5
CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 3, 7. S/H WINNERS: Nos. 1, 4, 5, 6, 2, 7, 3, 8.

SP FORECAST: 3 Rivers Corner, 7-2 King's Threshold, 6 Ideal Des Bordes, 13-2 Minella Blueway, Only The Bold, 8 Annual Invictus, Brave Kingdom, 14 Hold That Taught.

2024: Henry's Friend 7-11-12, Ben Jones 7-2 (B Pauling), 9 ran.

GUIDE: Rivers Corner, a proven stayer, is one to monitor closely in the betting now he has topped up his match-fitness with a couple of recent runs. Having led until three out at Sandown (3m5f, gd-sft) 23 days ago, cutting back a couple of furlongs could be ideal this time. However, **ONLY THE BOLD** was a game winner over this trip at Uttoxeter (gd) on his penultimate start and he could offer a shade more value from just a 4lb higher mark after a respectable third at Sandown (3m, gd). **King's Threshold** is a previous course (2m7f, gd) winner to also consider.

2.22 JOIN CORAL HANDICAP HURDLE ITV4
£15,843 (3) 2m 4f 118yds (15)

1	21211-7	**JURANCON (44) (C)** D Pipe 6 12-2	**J Tudor**	128
2	121L2/P	**DIAMOND RI (31)** J Tizzard 6 11-12	**B J Powell**	–
3	9/U09-3P	**CHAMPAGNE TWIST (24)** B Pauling 7 11-12	**B R Jones**	92
4	1325-31	**PEACENIK (17)** Katy Price 6 11-12	**G Sheehan**	130
5	U315-32	**ANDASHAN (37)** C Gordon 5 11-11	**F Gordon**	129
6	213215	**DON VIRGINIA (66)** J & A O'Neill 5 11-11	**Jonjo O'Neill Jr**	127
7	21151-3	**KALIUM (30) (C)** T Vaughan 5 11-9	**Mr E Vaughan(7)**	127
8	33-11	● **SCORPIO RISING (41)** O Murphy 5 11-5	**S Bowen**	127
9	21F31-5	**I'M A LUMBERJACK (31) (D)** A King 6 11-4	**T Bellamy**	128
10	013P-57	**CASTELFORT (38)** Mrs J Williams 5 11-4	**I Ryder(7)**	★131
11	32-3U13	**DOCTORS HILL (25)** P Hobbs & J White 5 11-1	**S Houlihan**	127
12	6433-1P	**THANKYOURLUCKYSTAR (40)** A Ralph 9 11-1	**H Skelton**	129
13	334-283	**TORRENT (24)** N Hawke 4 11-1	**J M Davies**	126
14	851/P-46	**MEATLOAF (25)** P Nicholls 6 11-0	**F Keighley(7)**	125
15	PP1-12L	**GET THE VALUE (168)** J G O'Shea 7 10-7	**K Woods**	128

TONGUE STRAP: No. 1 CHEEK PIECES: No. 6 HOOD: No. 9.
SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 5, 10, 3, 2, 11, 1, 7, 4, 8, 13.

SP FORECAST: 7-2 Scorpio Rising, 11-2 Andashan, 6 Doctors Hill, 15-2 I'm A Lumberjack, 8 Peacenik, 10 Jurancon, Kalium, 14 Don Virginia, Diamond Ri, 20 Others.

2024: Jipcot 5-11-4, Kielan Woods 14-1 (J & A O'Neill), 11 ran.

GUIDE: Many of these are closely matched on the official ratings and there wouldn't be much to choose between the likes of **Andashan**, **Scorpio Rising** and **Peacenik**. However, there is also plenty to like about **DOCTORS HILL,** who is lightly raced over hurdles and dropped a significant hint of more to come with a respectable third on his handicap debut at Wincanton (1m,7f, gd-sft) earlier this month. Nudged up 1lb, the unexposed five-year-old has a very feasible chance of supplementing the success he gained in novice company at Chepstow (2m, sft) prior to that promising effort.

TRACK FACTS: GOING: Good to Soft. Left Handed. **TOP TRACK JOCKEY (2020-25):** Harry Cobden 21% Strike rate. **TOP TRACK TRAINER (2020-25):** P Nicholls 21% Strike rate. **FIRST TIME:** 1.15 Rath Gaul Hill (cheek pieces, tongue strap), 2.22 I'm A Lumberjack (hood), 3.35 Harsh (blinkers), 12.05 White Noise (tongue strap). **BEATEN FAVOURITES:** 1.50 Rivers Corner(hcp ch). 2.22 Castelfort(hcp ch), Get The Value(hcp hdl), I'm A Lumberjack(hcp hdl), Jurancon(hcp hdl). 3.00 Giantsgrave, Kalkbrenner. 3.35 Holloway Queen(hcp ch). **LONGEST TRAVELLER: Newton Tornado** (3.35) 192 miles. **STABLE SWITCH:** 12.40 **Gulf Coast Highway** from A Slattery in Ireland to N Mulholland, **Minella Yoga** from J Nallen in Ireland to P Nicholls. 3.35 **Harsh** from G Elliott in Ireland to M Bowen.

3.00 CHALLOW NOVS' HURDLE (GRADE 1) ITV4
£56,950 (1) 2m 4f 118yds (9)

1	112-114	**DESTINATION DUBAI (45)** 6 11 7	**Doubtful**	136	Runs: 9	Wins: 4(GS,G)	Places: 1	£28,383	D Killahena & G McPherson	The Reserved Judgment Partnership
2	13-31	**ETNA BIANCO (37)** 5 11 7	**B J Powell**	131	Runs: 4	Wins: 2(G)	Places: 1	£16,750	Trainer: J Tizzard	Owner: L Hunt, M-a Middleton, J P Romans
3	2/1-3	**GIANTSGRAVE (41)** 5 11 7	**H Skelton**	120	Runs: 3	Wins: 1(S)	Places: 1	£3,416	Trainer: D Skelton	Owner: Noel Fehily Racing Syndicate - Giants
4	14-12	● **KALKBRENNER (30)** 5 11 7	**B R Jones**	135	Runs: 4	Wins: 2(S)	Places: 1	£9,495	B Pauling	Owner: Mrs Penny Barker And Mr Jeremy Palin
5	34/41	**KLIMT MADRIK (30) (C&D)** 5 11 7	**K Brogan**	129	Runs: 4	Wins: 1(S)		£9,742	Trainer: T Lawes	Owner: Alex and Janet Card
6	11	**MONTEMARES (25) (D)** 4 11 7	**S Sheppard**	128	Runs: 2	Wins: 2(GS,G)		£8,006	Trainer: T Lacey	Owner: John & Gay Chinn
7	1/19-11	**NO DRAMA THIS END (24) (D)** 5 11 7	**H Cobden**	★147	Runs: 5	Wins: 4(S)		£95,505	P Nicholls	Owner: McNeill Family And Chris & Giles Barbe
8	2/11-1	**STARZAND (62)** 5 11 7	**Sean Houlihan**	120	Runs: 4	Wins: 3(S,G)		£6,570	Trainer: P Hobbs & J White	Owner: Gwent Holdings Limited
9	131-21	**TIPTOPTIM (53) (D)** 5 11 7	**G Sheehan**	125	Runs: 5	Wins: 3(G)	Places: 2	£11,711	J Snowden	Owner: The Picnic Party And The Tiptop Team

TONGUE STRAP: No. 1. SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 3, 4, 5, 7, 8.

SP FORECAST: 8-13 No Drama This End, 15-2 Starzand, 8 Montemares, 10 Kalkbrenner, 12 Etna Bianco, 16 Klimt Madrik, 20 Giantsgrave, 25 Tiptoptim.

2024: The New Lion 5-11-7, Harry Skelton 9-4 (D Skelton), 7 ran.

GUIDE: Paul Nicholls has won four of the last five renewals of this race and has unearthed another talented individual in the form of **NO DRAMA THIS END.** After Grade 2 wins at Cheltenham (2m5f, sft) and Sandown (2m4f, sft), the son of Walk In The Park is a highly exciting prospect that is hard to ignore. **Starzand** and **Kalkbrenner** are the most obvious contenders for the places, although **Montemares** has yet to taste defeat and is another interesting option now he steps up in class.

3.35 NOVICES' LIMITED HANDICAP CHS ITV4
£11,618 (3) 2m 6f 93yds (8)

1	228PF-1	**GUARD THE MOON (23)** N & W Twiston-Davies 7 11-10	**S Twiston-Davies**	★140
2	42-L3U0	**HARSH (150)** M Bowen 5 11-8	**S Bowen**	135
3	2221-F1	● **NEWTON TORNADO (30)** R Curtis 6 11-5	**B R Jones**	138
4	503-934	**RIGHTSOTOM (16)** J Tizzard 6 11-5	**B J Powell**	139
5	3-L8125	**POUNDING POET (64)** T Lacey 9 11-2	**S Sheppard**	–
6	114P-PU	**HOLLOWAY QUEEN (9)** N Henderson 5 11-2	**D Bass**	–
7	221P-	**CALIMYSTIC (261)** N Henderson 6 10-9	**N De Boinville**	–
8	03/2D2-L	**CAPTAIN BELLAMY (31)** P Nicholls 6 10-9	**H Cobden**	117

BLINKERS: No. 2 VISOR: No. 5 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 4, 5
CHEEK PIECES: No. 4. SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 1, 6, 3, 5.

SP FORECAST: 2 Newton Tornado, 10-3 Guard The Moon, 13-2 Rightsotom, 15-2 Captain Bellamy, Calimystic, 10 Holloway Queen, 12 Pounding Poet, 14 Harsh.

GUIDE: Newton Tornado looks just the type to excel in this discipline and an 8lb rise for his latest triumph at Bangor (3m, hvy) shouldn't prevent another bold bid. However, ground conditions are forecast to be quicker and **GUARD THE MOON** is slightly more appealing. The seven-year-old made the perfect start to his chasing career when scoring at Aintree (2m4f, sft) earlier this month. **Rightsotom** is a potential improver stepping up in distance, while the lightly-raced **Calimystic** isn't easily dismissed either.

BEST OF LEOPARDSTOWN RTV

2.32 DECEMBER HURDLE (GRADE 1) ITV4
€90,000 (1) 2m (8)

1	11/11-2	**ANZADAM (30) (D)** W P Mullins 5 11-12	**Mr P W Mullins**	156
2	2-1311F	**CASHELDALE LAD (29) (D)** G Elliott 5 11-12	**J C Gainford**	149
3	408957	**FUTURUM REGEM (F33)** H Finegan 9 11-12	**E Finegan**	–
4	116-3	**HELLO NEIGHBOUR (F181) (C&D)** G Cromwell 4 11-12	**K M Donoghue**	143
5	3/171-1L	**IRANCY (37) (D)** W P Mullins 7 11-12	**M P Walsh**	154
6	3-450L6	**WINTER FOG (37) (C&D)** W P Mullins 11 11-12	**B Hayes**	142
7	1/1114-3	**BRIGHTERDAYSAHEAD (240) (C&D)** G Elliott 6 11-5	**J W Kennedy**	★171
8	12F11-1	**LOSSIEMOUTH (37) (C&D)** W P Mullins 6 11-5	**P Townend**	168

BLINKERS: No. 3 CHEEK PIECES: No. 6 HOOD: Nos. 1, 2, 4.

SP FORECAST: 8-15 Lossiemouth, 9-2 Brighterdaysahead, 5 Anzadam, 14 Irancy, 20 Casheldale Lad, 33 Hello Neighbour, 66 Winter Fog, 200 Futurum Regem.

2024: Brighterdaysahead 5-11-5, Sam Ewing 5-2 (G Elliott), 6 ran.

THE SCOUT

11.40 Hygge
12.12 Jalon D'Oudairies
12.47 Fierce Handay
1.22 Wodhooh
1.57 My Immortal
2.32 Lossiemouth
3.05 Sa Fureur
3.40 Passenger

TRACK FACTS: GOING: Yielding. Left Handed. **TOP TRACK JOCKEY (2020-25):** Paul Townend 39% Strike rate. **TOP TRACK TRAINER (2020-25):** W P Mullins 18% Strike rate. **FIRST TIME:** 1.57 Well Del (blinkers), 3.05 Champagne Kid (cheek pieces), Franciscan Rock (blinkers), 11.40 Try Them (hood), O'grady Cracker (cheek pieces), 12.12 Double Power (cheek pieces, tongue strap), Irish Champ (hood, tongue strap), Dysart Dolomite (tongue strap). **BEATEN FAVOURITES:** 11.40 Hygge, O'grady Cracker. 12.12 Dani Donadoni, Spinningayarn. 12.47 Sunny South West. 1.22 Sixandahalf. 1.57 Aurea Fortuna(hcp ch), Kish Bank. 3.05 Air Of Entitlement. 3.40 Bud Fox. **STABLE SWITCH:** 12.12 **Double Power** from Gerard Fox in Ireland to Ian Donoghue, **Gallant George** from Virginia Considine in Ireland to Ian Donoghue. 3.40 **Gomez Addams** from A Slattery in Ireland to H De Bromhead, **Mossy Way** from P M J Doyle to E Buckley.

VITAL STATISTICS

IN-FORM TRAINERS (last 10 days) T Lawes 75% (1 wins and 2 places from 4 runners), N Richards 62% (2/6/13), A M Thomson 60% (1/2/5), Billy Aprahamian 60% (1/2/5), T Easterby 57% (2/2/7), W Haggas 57% (1/3/7), E Lavelle 50% (1/6/14), E Walker 50% (2/2/8), J O'Keeffe 50% (1/1/4).

IN-FORM JOCKEYS Jonjo O'Neill Jr 64% (7 wins and 2 places from 14 runners), David Nolan 60% (5/4/15), Gavin Sheehan 57% (7/6/23), Craig Nichol 56% (3/7/18), Billy Loughnane 52% (13/10/44), Freddie Keighley 50% (2/1/6).

GOSSIP FROM THE GALLOPS

Wales: DOCTOR BLUE (1.00 Doncaster)
North: TASHKHAN (12.54 Kelso)
Lambourn: MERAPI (5.45 Newcastle)
West: NO DRAMA THIS END (3.00 Newbury)

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WON 6-5 (Leicester)
ONE EYE ON VEGAS
WON 15-8 (Leicester)
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WON 3-1 (Lingfield)
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DONCASTER SKYSPORTSRACING

THE SCOUT

11.50 Blue Las
12.25 Penn Avenue
1.00 Draco Malfoy
1.35 Some Scope
2.10 PAGGANE (nap)
2.45 Spike Jones
3.20 Park Talk

11.50 'CHASING EXCELLENCE' BEGINNERS' CHS
£6,535 (Class 3) 2m 7f 214yds (3 declared)

1 1312/P-2 **MAXIMILIAN (26) (F)** D McCain 9 11-5 .... **B Hughes** 142
2 2131-U2 ● **BLUE LAS (18)** N Mulholland 7 10-12 .... **D Johnston** ★149
3 34L331 **LUNAR DISCOVERY (2)** R L Llewellyn 8 10-12......... **Doubtful**

SP FORECAST: 4-6 Maximilian, 5-4 Blue Las.
2024: No corresponding race.

12.25 FILLIES' JUVENILE MAIDEN HURDLE 3YO
£4,193 (4) 2m 128yds (8)

1 **FITZROY GARDENS (F76) (F)** M Hammond 11-0.... **J Bowen** –
2 **FLAME DANCER (F76)** Noel Williams 11-0............. **J J Burke** –
3 513 **LAYSOFT (31)** J Parkinson & S Smith 11-0...... **P J Kavanagh** 83
4 3 **MADE U BLUSH (18)** D Skelton 11-0......................... **B Hughes** ★102
5 **MELOSA (F63)** M Sowersby 11-0..................... **A Anderson(5)** –
6 ● **PENN AVENUE (F82) (T)** D Pipe 11-0............. **C O'Farrell** –
7 L **RITAAN (24)** G Nicholls 11-0............................ **F Lambert(3)** 62
8 UU4 **ROSSO LEVANTO (18)** G Hanmer 11-0....... **J A Anderson(3)** 60

TONGUE STRAP: No. 5 CHEEK PIECES: No. 1 HOOD: Nos. 2, 7.
SP FORECAST: 4-5 Made U Blush, 2 Penn Avenue, 7 Fitzroy Gardens, 14 Laysoft, 25 Flame Dancer, 33 Melosa, 100 Ritaan, Rosso Levanto.
2024: Matwana 11-0, Paul O'Brien 3-1 (Harry Derham), 8 ran.

1.00 BRITISH EBF 'NH' NOVICES' HURDLE
£4,193 (4) 2m 3f 88yds (8)

1 153-21 **DOCTOR BLUE (38) (T)** S Thomas 5 11-10.......... **D Johnston** ★132
2 4/1435-1 ● **DRACO MALFOY (22)** K Bailey & M Nicholls 5 11-6 **C Gethings** 124
3 2414 **GET ON GEORGE (30)** J Parkinson & S Smith 5 11-6..**C Bewley** 126
4 36-31 **TIDDESLEY WOOD (36)** F O'Brien 5 11-6................. **J J Burke** 128
5 6-4 **HIDDEN TARGET (54)** R Phillips 6 11-0........... **F Lambert(3)** 94
6 4R- **IT'S PARTY TIME (254)** N Kent 4 11-0 .... **C Hammond** –
7 1-L **JACKPOT CAUVELIERE (40)** H Derham 6 11-0..... **P O'Brien** 113
8 **STAGGE HYLL** Seamus Mullins 4 11-0............... **D Sansom(3)** –

TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 1, 4.
SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 2, 3, 7.
SP FORECAST: 13-8 Doctor Blue, 5-2 Tiddesley Wood, 4 Draco Malfoy, 6 Get On George, 8 Jackpot Cauveliere, 50 Stagge Hyll, 66 It's Party Time, 100 Hidden Target.
2024: Jus De Citron 5-11-0, Paul O'Brien 11-4 (Harry Derham), 5 ran.

1.35 GRACE AND DOTTY HANDICAP CHASE
£6,179 (3) 2m 7f 214yds (7)

1 2/3224-5 **MAGICAL KING (30)** S Edmunds 6 11-9............. **C Hammond** 114
2 P-LDLPP **MORODER (24) (C,D)** Seamus Mullins 11 11-8.............. **J Best** ★135
3 3021-21 **FIERCE WARRIOR (30) (C)** N Henderson 6 11-7..... **J Bowen** 130
4 PP5-3L5 ● **SOME SCOPE (23) (C&D)** R Hobson 7 11-6... **C Maggs(5)** 134
5 6411-66 **KI WOO (30)** O Greenall & J Guerriero 5 11-6 ...**Craig Nichol** 114
6 24LP4-L **FORTESCUE (26) (D)** H Daly 11 11-4...................... **C Gethings** 126
7 411-L12 **LADRONNE (17) (C&D,F)** J Parkinson & S Smith 11 11-2 **P J Kavanagh** 128

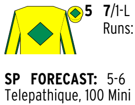
VISOR: No. 4 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 4, 5, 7 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 1, 2, 6.
SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 3, 6, 7, 1, 2.
SP FORECAST: 13-8 Fierce Warrior, 4 Ladronne, 6 Magical King, Fortescue, 7 Some Scope, 10 Ki Woo, 16 Moroder.
2024: Finn Lough 5-10-8, Henry Brooke 11-10 Fav (O Greenall & J Guerriero), 6 ran.

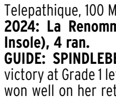
2.10 SILVER VASE MARES' CHS (LISTED)
£42,712 (1) 2m 4f 115yds (5) ITV4

1 P1411-4 **FUN FUN FUN (36)** 7 11 6............. **Bryony Frost** 155
Runs: 15 Wins: 8(S,GS) Places: 1 £152,441
W P Mullins (IRE) Owner: Mr Simon Munir/mr Isaac Souede

2 12-2211 ● **PAGGANE (33) (F)** 6 11 6................. **J Bowen** 153
Runs: 20 Wins: 5(S,GS,G) Places: 10 £119,982
Faye Bramley Owner: J Carthy, Mrs P Shanahan & R Bartlett

3 2/5111-1 **SPINDLEBERRY (53) (D)** 7 11 6........... **D Mullins** ★158
Runs: 9 Wins: 6(S) Places: 2 £111,094
Trainer: W P Mullins (IRE) Owner: Fearghal & Bronagh Eastwood


4 1211-24 **TELEPATHIQUE (31) (D)** 7 11 6........... **T Cannon** 153
Runs: 12 Wins: 6(S,GS,G) Places: 3 £100,820
Trainer: L Wadham Owner: Mrs Elizabeth Gordon Lennox


5 7/1-L **MINI MILDRED (33)** 6 11 2................ **C O'Farrell** 125
Runs: 3 Wins: 1(G) £2,131

CHEEK PIECES: No. 5 HOOD: No. 1.
SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4.
SP FORECAST: 5-6 Spindleberry, 5-2 Paggane, 11-2 Fun Fun Fun, 15-2 Telepathique, 100 Mini Mildred.
2024: La Renommee 6-11-2, Charlie Hammond 6-1 (Dr R Newland & J Insole), 4 ran.
GUIDE: SPINDLEBERRY remains unbeaten over fences and that includes a victory at Grade 1 level over geldings at Fairyhouse (2m4f, sft-hvy) last April. She won well on her return at Clonmel (2m5f, sft) in November and could prove to be too good for these. That said, stablemate **Fun Fun Fun** is a very capable performer on her day and should not be underestimated, while **Paggane** arrives in top form and is another to note.

2.45 AT THE RACES HANDICAP HURDLE
£5,651 (3) 3m 84yds (6) ITV4

1 2P32P-L **BUGISE SEAGULL (31)** C Longsdon 7 12-0............. **B Hughes** ★136
2 6221-13 **J J MOON (31) (F)** E Lavelle 6 11-9......................... **J J Burke** 133
3 2214-11 **ROCKOLA VOGUE (37) (D)** D Killahena & G McPherson 6 11-7 **N Slatter(3)** 135
4 2L2L8P/ **HILLVIEW (704) (D)** G Hanmer 9 11-2....... **J A Anderson(3)** –
5 5/136-23 ● **SPIKE JONES (17)** S Drinkwater 8 10-12........ **B Macey(7)** 134
6 4461-P1 **STONE'S THROW (27) (D)** Billy Aprahamian 5 10-9.... **J Bowen** 132

TONGUE STRAP: No. 5 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 1, 5.
SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 3, 5, 6.
SP FORECAST: 15-8 Rockola Vogue, 3 J J Moon, 10-3 Stone's Throw, 5 Spike Jones, 7 Bugise Seagull, 66 Hillview.
2024: Super Survivor 8-10-13, Gavin Sheehan 4-1 (J Snowden), 6 ran.
GUIDE: STONE'S THROW had plenty in hand when scoring at Southwell (3m, gd-sft) earlier in the month and the five-year-old could be hard to beat once again, despite a 5lb rise for that success. The hat-trick seeking **Rockola Vogue** is an obvious threat to the selection and has to be respected as a result, while **J J Moon** edges out **Spike Jones** to be the pick of the remainder.

3.20 ATTHERACES.COM HANDICAP HURDLE
£4,066 (4) 2m 128yds (11)

1 314F-27 **PADDYS POLICY (51) (D)** D McCain 5 12-2......... **C Maggs(5)** 110
2 221-325 ● **PARK TALK (31)** Harry Derham 5 12-1.......... **Paul O'Brien** 102
3 5313P-5 **LIGHT FANDANGO (30)** N Mulholland 6 11-13..... **C O'Farrell** 100
4 3/9U-424 **AEROPLANE BLONDE (45)** S Drinkwater 5 11-11..**R T Dunne** 107
5 3/104-LL **GOLDEN MOVE (29)** C Kellett 5 11-11......................... **T Wynne** 111
6 5-646 **AIM STRAIGHT (27)** A Ralph 5 11-6 .... **C Gethings** 106
7 570536 **CALLIN BATON ROUGE (22)** C & A Pogson 7 11-5..**C J Todd** 109
8 243P-6 **TECH THAT (59)** R Phillips 6 11-5..................... **F Lambert(3)** 70
9 442626 **BELCAMO (42)** A Hales 4 11-2.......................................**B Carver** 110
10 776 **QUEEN ROSLYN (13)** B Ellison 4 10-5 .... **B Hughes** 108
11 4143UL **PLATENIUM (34)** S England 6 10-3.......................... **J Quinlan** ★112

TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 3, 5, 11 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 5, 11 HOOD: No. 4.
SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 5, 3.
SP FORECAST: 3 Park Talk, 9-2 Platenium, 6 Aeroplane Blonde, 7 Queen Roslyn, Paddys Policy, 10 Belcamo, 12 Aim Straight, Light Fandango, 14 Others.
2024: Cuban Court 6-10-2, Jack Quinlan 10-3 (N King), 8 ran.

TRACK FACTS: GOING: Good to Soft. Left Handed. **TOP TRACK JOCKEY (2020-25):** Brian Hughes 15% Strike rate. **TOP TRACK TRAINER (2020-25):** N Henderson 23% Strike rate. **FIRST TIME:** 1.00 It's Party Time (wind surgery), 2.45 Bugise Seagull (cheek pieces), 3.20 Platenium (cheek pieces, tongue strap), Tech That (wind surgery), Paddys Policy (wind surgery), 12.25 Flame Dancer (hood), Melosa (tongue strap), Fitzroy Gardens (cheek pieces). **BEATEN FAVOURITES:** 12.25 Made U Blush. 2.10 Fun Fun Fun. 3.20 Platenium(hcp hdl). **LONGEST TRAVELLER: Spindleberry** (2.10) & **Fun Fun Fun** (2.10) Ireland; **Penn Avenue** (12.25) 238 miles. **STABLE SWITCH:** 12.25 **Fitzroy Gardens** from Donnacha O'Brien in Ireland to M Hammond, **Flame Dancer** from D Loughnane to Noel Williams, **Melosa** from Alice Haynes to M Sowersby, **Penn Avenue** from D & C Kubler to D Pipe. 1.00 **It's Party Time** from Mary Ellen Doyle in Ireland to N Kent.

KELSO RACINGTV

THE SCOUT

11.45 The Four Sixes
12.19 Blakey Boy
12.54 COUNTRY CODE
1.29 They're Chancers
2.04 Malayalam
2.39 Lowlands
3.15 Baratablet

11.45 CHAS 'CHASING EXCELLENCE' NOVS' CHS
£7,922 (Class 3) 2m 1f 14yds (3 declared)

1 5F67L6 **AEROS LUCK (22)** A M Thomson 6 11-10........... **W Maggs(5)** 123
2 UP11-16 ● **THE FOUR SIXES (37) (T)** O Murphy 7 11-10 **Mr J King(3)** ★144
3 12/P5-44 **CHUMLEE (41)** S Forster 10 11-4............................ **P W Wadge** 104

TONGUE STRAP: No. 1 HOOD: Nos. 1, 3.
SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 3, 2.
SP FORECAST: 1-6 The Four Sixes, 9-2 Aeros Luck, 33 Chumlee.
2024: No corresponding race.

12.19 AJA AMATEUR JOCKEYS' HANDICAP CHASE
£4,967 (4) 3m 2f 39yds (6)

1 32-1323 **GREAT NOTIONS (29) (F)** F Needham 6 12-0 **Mr J Dawson** 117
2 3125-51 **GOLDEN POINT (41) (C)** L Russell & M Scudamore 6 11-10 **Mr N Orpwood(3)** 115
3 12-L5L1 **SUPER CITIZEN (29) (C,D)** L Hughes 11 11-3**Mr P Barlow(3)** 113
4 3/PL4-52 **COURT AT SLIP (29)** T Easterby 8 11-2........ **Mr W Easterby** 114
5 L1-27F2 ● **BLAKEY BOY (18)** Ewan Whillans 5 11-0............**Mr J King** 116
6 58L/14U- **SKYHILL (308) (C&D)** Mrs A C Hamilton 12 10-11..**Miss H Palin(3)** ★119

BLINKERS: No. 4 TONGUE STRAP: No. 6 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 1, 3, 5.
SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 4, 2, 6, 3.
SP FORECAST: 9-4 Golden Point, 3 Super Citizen, 4 Great Notions, 5 Court At Slip, Blakey Boy, 20 Skyhill.
2024: Skyhill 11-10-2, Miss Heidi Palin(5) 10-1 (Mrs A C Hamilton), 8 ran.

12.54 SLAINTE MHATH NOVICES' HURDLE
£4,357 (4) 2m 6f 151yds (8)

1 23-1 ● **COUNTRY CODE (45)** Ruth Jefferson 5 11-7..**D McMenamin** 112
2 7231-17 **IMPERFECTLYPERFECT (45)** L Russell & M Scudamore 5 11-7 **D R Fox** 113
3 1 **TASHKHAN (19) (F)** B Ellison 7 11-7..................**Sean Quinlan** 116
4 F/P1-56 **BURNCOURT BOY (30) (T)** O Murphy 5 11-0 .... **L Stones(3)** ★127
5 3PP-1 **OLD COMRADES (232)** N Alexander 5 11-0..................**B Lynn** –
6 33/ **YORKSHIRE MAN SAM (1138)** M Walford 7 11-0 **J Hamilton** –
7 4-447 **IVAN'S LEGACY (22)** S Corbett 4 10-13 .... **C Rabbitt(3)** 86
8 4-0L **AM I BOVVERED (28)** S Forster 5 10-7 .... **P W Wadge** –

HOOD: No. 7. SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 3.
SP FORECAST: 15-8 Tashkhan, 2 Country Code, 4 Burncourt Boy, 13-2 Imperfectlyperfect, 10 Old Comrades, 25 Yorkshire Man Sam, 66 Ivan's Legacy, 200 Am I Bovvered.
2024: Ace Of Spades 5-11-7, Harry Skelton 8-15 Fav (D Skelton), 8 ran.

1.29 RACING TV MAIDEN HURDLE (DIV 1)
£4,225 (4) 2m 51yds (11)

1 6L **BELVEDERE BHOY (22)** L Russell & M Scudamore 4 11-4 **D R Fox** 81
2 7 **ELEMENTAL EYE (31)** I Jardine 4 11-4...................**N Moscrop** 97
3 3-PP **ELLISTRIN BAY (31)** D Whillans 6 11-4................. **J Hamilton** –
4 5-42L **KNOCKERANNA ROSE (19)** S Corbett 5 11-4....**C Rabbitt(3)** 91
5 53/37-3 **LANCE LES DES (41)** N Alexander 6 11-4 ....**Sean Quinlan** 106
6 861-0 **LESTER MAIL (65)** N Alexander 4 11-4 ....**B Lynn** 71
7 339-U4 **LINALENE (41)** L Russell & M Scudamore 4 11-4 **P W Wadge** 101
8 236 **PARTY IN THE PARK (30)** A Hamilton 4 11-4............**R Mania** 111
9 1- ● **THEY'RE CHANCERS (342) (F)** N Richards 5 11-4 **D McMenamin** –
10 1/4-2 **THEY WANT ME (30) (T)** D McCain 5 11-4................**T Gillard** ★124
11 88 **CHANGEMYLUCK (18)** W Coltherd 5 10-11............**R Chapman** –

BLINKERS: No. 3. SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 9.
SP FORECAST: 2 They Want Me, 3 They're Chancers, 5 Lance Les Des, 13-2 Linalene, 10 Party In The Park, 12 Elemental Eye, 14 Knockeranna Rose, 16 Belvedere Bhoy, 25 Others.
2024: Captain Butler 6-11-4, Craig Nichol 7-2 (Miss P Robson), 14 ran.

2.04 RACING TV MAIDEN HURDLE (DIV 2)
£4,225 (4) 2m 51yds (10)

1 25-2 **ANOTHER HIGH FIVE (15)** L Russell & M Scudamore 5 11-4 **A Doyle(3)** 96
2 43-12 **CAVALIER DU LUY (47)** N Alexander 4 11-4.................**B Lynn** ★117
3 63-3 **COUNT ADHEMAR (30) (T)** D McCain 5 11-4............ **T Gillard** 104
4 531- ● **MALAYALAM (310)** L Russell & M Scudamore 5 11-4 **D R Fox** –
5 29/3-L **MR LINCOLN (18) (F)** I Jardine 5 11-4...............**Sean Quinlan** 81
6 4 **QUERCUS ROBUR (31)** A Nicol 6 11-4 ....**R Mania** 101
7 1P5 **SUSPECTED (22)** N Alexander 5 11-4.................... **P W Wadge** 96
8 3L-P **THE LOW BALL (18)** Mrs A C Hamilton 5 11-4 ..... **J Hamilton** –
9 2-215 **WILLIAM YEATS (13)** R Menzies 4 11-4..................**N Moscrop** 98
10 066-6L **TIGGERELLI (22)** Paul Robson 5 10-11 .... **D McMenamin** 82

HOOD: No. 5. SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 9.
SP FORECAST: 7-4 Cavalier Du Luy, 3 Malayalam, 6 Quercus Robur, 13-2 William Yeats, 10 Count Adhemar, Mr Lincoln, 12 Another High Five, 25 Suspected, 100 Others.
2024: Captain Butler 6-11-4, Craig Nichol 7-2 (Miss P Robson), 14 ran.

TRACK FACTS: GOING: Good to Soft. Left Handed. **TOP TRACK JOCKEY (2020-25):** Derek Fox 20% Strike rate. **TOP TRACK TRAINER (2020-25):** A M Thomson 16% Strike rate. **FIRST TIME:** 1.29 Ellistrin Bay (blinkers), 2.39 Theatre Light (tongue strap, wind surgery). **BEATEN FAVOURITES:** 12.19 Court At Slip(hcp ch). 2.04 Quercus Robur. 2.39 Magnolia(hcp hdl). **LONGEST TRAVELLER: The Four Sixes** (11.45) & **Burncourt Boy** (12.54) 293 miles. **STABLE SWITCH:** 12.54 **Old Comrades** from S Doyle in Ireland to N Alexander. 2.04 **Malayalam** from J Fogarty in Ireland to L Russell & M Scudamore.

2.39 RACINGTV.COM MARES' HANDICAP HDLE
£4,753 (4) 2m 2f 25yds (9)

1 532-115 **MAGNOLIA (31) (C,D)** M Hammond 6 12-0..**J Thompson(7)** 118
2 4L34-82 **SPEIRIUIL (31)** A Nicol 5 10-11..**R Mania** 121
3 24F33-L **INSPIRE HOPE (31)** R Menzies 4 10-11................ **W Maggs(5)** ★124
4 459-422 ● **LOWLANDS (31) (F)** N Richards 6 10-9..... **D McMenamin** 119
5 876/155- **NELLIE BLUESKY (366)** Ewan Whillans 7 10-8..... **S Quinlan** 100
6 4F-32LF **THEIRSHEGOES (31)** A M Thomson 8 10-6.......... **J Hamilton** 117
7 0-6921P **TREAD SOFTLY NOW (24) (C&D)** I Duncan 6 10-4.**A Doyle(3)** 118
8 34P-443 **SHE'S NOTJOEKING (47)** L Russell & M Scudamore 5 10-3 **P W Wadge** 119
9 21/2L-5P **THEATRE LIGHT (87)** S Corbett 7 10-2 ....**N Moscrop** 115

TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 1, 9 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 2, 7.
SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 1, 8, 2, 9, 7.
SP FORECAST: 13-8 Lowlands, 7-2 Speiriuil, 11-2 Magnolia, 8 She's Notjoeking, 12 Tread Softly Now, Nellie Bluesky, Theirshegoes, 20 Inspire Hope, 25 Theatre Light.
2024: Komedy Kicks 5-12-0, Harry Skelton 11-4 Fav (D Skelton), 7 ran.

3.15 CHAS HANDICAP HURDLE
£9,506 (3) 2m 6f 151yds (7) ITV4

1 1P17/4P **ESPRIT DU POTIER (37)** L Russell & M Scudamore 6 12-0 **D R Fox** 122
2 22131-1 ● **BARATABLET (18) (F)** N Richards 5 11-10 **D McMenamin** 124
3 21/761-8 **BOTH BARRELS (47) (C&D)** D Whillans 7 11-9**Sean Quinlan** 120
4 10/F3-U5 **ELOI DU PUY (29) (C)** N Alexander 7 11-2 ....**B Lynn** 123
5 P/06L1-3 **MAGIC WAVE (236) (C)** M Walford 9 11-1 .... **J Hamilton** 123
6 3413-4L **PARISIAN FASHION (31)** R Menzies 6 10-9.........**R Chapman** ★125
7 46P3-PL **PURE SIRLOIN (19)** S Forster 7 10-2 .... **P W Wadge** 116

VISOR: No. 7. SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 3, 4, 1, 7.
SP FORECAST: 6-4 Baratablet, 7-2 Esprit Du Potier, 11-2 Parisian Fashion, 15-2 Both Barrels, Magic Wave, 10 Eloi Du Puy, 25 Pure Sirloin.
2024: Idem 6-12-0, Patrick Wadge 12-1 (L Russell), 11 ran.
GUIDE: BARATABLET continued his progression when scoring impressively on his seasonal return at Newcastle (2m4f, gd-sft) earlier in the month and Nicky Richards' gelding could be hard to stop now seeking a hat-trick, despite a 7lb rise. **Magic Wave** was not disgraced when third over C&D (gd) when last seen in May and has to be noted. **Esprit Du Potier** drops significantly in grade and should not be written off.

NEWCASTLE TRACKFACTS

TRACK FACTS: GOING: Standard. Left Handed. **TOP TRACK JOCKEY (2020-25):** Paul Mulrennan 14% Strike rate. **TOP TRACK TRAINER (2020-25):** R Fahey 12% Strike rate. **FIRST TIME:** 4.15 Angelic Rascal (tongue strap), 5.15 Monsieur Kodi (cheek pieces), 7.15 Tootsie (cheek pieces). **BEATEN FAVOURITES:** 3.10 Prince Quattro(hcp). 3.45 Viking Glory. 4.45 Al Muqdad(hcp). 6.45 Bomb Squad(hcp), Cable Beach(hcp). **DRAW:** High numbers have a slight advantage over 5f. **LONGEST TRAVELLER: Dagger Strike** (4.15), **Merapi** (5.45), **Mapledurham** (6.15) 284 miles. **STABLE SWITCH:** 5.15 **Pop Star** from Alice Haynes to I Jardine. 6.15 **Mapledurham** from B Millman to E Walker. 7.15 **Tootsie** from T Easterby to P McEntee.

NEWCASTLE SKYSPORTSRACING

THE SCOUT

3.10 Alfred Spero
3.45 Starryfield
4.15 Dagger Strike
4.45 Towerlands
5.15 Stirrup Cup
5.45 Starliner
6.15 Rooska
6.45 Strobelight
7.15 GOLDMOYNE (nb)

3.10 MIDNITE BETTING APP HANDICAP
£3,716 (Class 5) 1m 4f 98yds (10 declared)

1 (1) 2732L4 **MOLINARI (16) (C&D)** M Todhunter 8 10-0...................... **A Brookes(3)** 74
2 (3) 424322 **PRINCE QUATTRO (13) (T)** James Owen 6 9-11 ....**P Cosgrave** 73
3 (6) 473571 **GOLSPIE (9) (C)** P Morris 5 9-9 ....**Kaiya Fraser** 74
4 (10) 687420 **DAMASCUS STEEL (11) (C&D) (T)** D P Quinn 5 9-9 .... **T Eaves** 73
5 (7) 131LL2 **ROYAL BLAZE (20) (C,F)** Ewan Whillans 4 9-6 .... **D Nolan** 73
6 (5) 427324 **PERCY WILLIS (17) (C&D)** J O'Keeffe 7 9-6 .... **H Doyle** 75
7 (4) 7-32638 **BLUE SKY BOY (16)** T Davidson 4 9-5 .... **C Fallon** ★78
8 (9) 717677 **ANNANDALE (11) (C)** J Goldie 7 9-4 .... **P Mulrennan** 71
9 (8) 138215 **BILLY BATHGATE (13) (C)** Ewan Whillans 9 9-2..........................**R Scott** 73
10 (2) 944935 ● **ALFRED SPERO (12)** G Tutty 3 8-8 .... **Rhys Elliott(5)** 71

VISOR: No. 4 TONGUE STRAP: No. 5 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 2, 3, 5, 6.
SP FORECAST: 9-4 Prince Quattro, 7-2 Golspie, 5 Royal Blaze, 7 Percy Willis, 10 Molinari, 12 Billy Bathgate, Alfred Spero, 14 Blue Sky Boy, 20 Others.

3.45 BETMGM.CO.UK EBF NOVICE STAKES 2YO
£5,211 (4) 6f (11)

1 (3) **EXTREMELY ZAIN (T)** W Haggas 9-7 .... **C Fallon** –
2 (11) L **KAMEKO FEVER (16)** R Fahey 9-7 .... **E Tindall(7)** 52
3 (8) **SKEWSBY** M & D Easterby 9-7 .... **B Garritty** –
4 (4) 2 ● **STARRYFIELD (172) (F) (T)** James Owen 9-7.............. **P Cosgrave** ★76
5 (1) 42 **VIKING GLORY (27)** A Keatley 9-7.. **B McHugh** 75
6 (9) 0 **BATTENBURG BELLE (10)** R Menzies 9-2 .... **A Mullen** 51
7 (10) **FREEZING HAVANA** Adrian Nicholls 9-2... **R Scott** –
8 (7) L35L34 **HAVIN A FLYER (3)** R Menzies 9-2 .... **Laura Coughlan(3)** 74
9 (5) 48 **QUIET SERENADE (10)** I Furtado 9-2 .... **T Eaves** 60
10 (6) **SPACE MOON** B Ellison 9-2... **C Hardie** –
11 (2) 8 **WHAT A TAHOO (169)** R Fahey 9-2.. **W Fentiman(5)** 46

SP FORECAST: 7-4 Starryfield, 9-4 Viking Glory, 7-2 Extremely Zain, 8 Havin A Flyer, 20 Space Moon, 25 What A Tahoo, Freezing Havana, 33 Quiet Serenade, Kameko Fever, 50 Others.
2024: The Watcher 9-4, Clifford Lee Evens Fav (K R Burke), drawn (10), 11 ran.

4.15 BET 10 GET 40 WITH BETMGM NURSERY 2YO
£3,716 (5) 7f 14yds (5)

1 (3) 658 ● **DAGGER STRIKE (116) (T)** A Watson 9-9............................. **H Doyle** 71
2 (1) 656L **ANGELIC RASCAL (21) (T)** G Boughey 9-3........................ **B Loughnane** 71
3 (4) 584 **HENRIETTE RONNER (37) (F) (T)** W Haggas 9-1........................ **C Fallon** ★73
4 (2) 763231 **POPTY PING (17) (D)** D O'Meara 9-1 .... **P Mulrennan** 72
5 (5) L6LL1 **CONTAINER EXPRESS (41) (C,F)** P Kirby 8-6 .... **A Brookes(3)** 71

VISOR: No. 4 TONGUE STRAP: No. 2.
SP FORECAST: 2 Container Express, 3 Popty Ping, Henriette Ronner, 5 Dagger Strike, 8 Angelic Rascal.

4.45 ALWAYS GAMBLE RESPONSIBLY AT BETMGM HANDICAP
£4,972 (4) 7f 14yds (7)

1 (6) 821835 **AL MUQDAD (9) (C&D)** D O'Meara 5 9-9 .... **D Nolan** 86
2 (7) 925111 ● **TOWERLANDS (10) (T)** A Carroll 3 9-8.......................... **Jack Doughty** 86
3 (5) 21-L153 **SELECTION (42) (C)** I Furtado 3 9-5... **T Eaves** 88
4 (2) 933130 **BLAZING SON (51) (C&D)** B Smart 7 9-5 .... **A Brookes(3)** 88
5 (4) 026644 **GRESSINGTON (9) (D)** K Scott 4 9-0.. **D Keenan** 89
6 (1) 057441 **YAASER (16) (C&D,F)** J Goldie 7 9-0 .... **Lauren Young(5)** ★90
7 (3) 754L61 **BOBBY JOE LEG (9) (C&D)** R Carr 11 8-13 .... **JP Sullivan** 86

BLINKERS: Nos. 5, 7.
SP FORECAST: 2 Towerlands, 11-4 Yaaser, 6 Selection, 8 Al Muqdad, Bobby Joe Leg, Gressington, 14 Blazing Son.
2024: King's School 3-9-3, Warren Fentiman(7) 11-1 (G Tutty), drawn (3), 11 ran.

5.15 MIDNITE, BUILDING THE FUTURE OF BETTING HCAP
£4,972 (4) 6f (10)

1 (10) 25L537 **ARNHEM (20) (D)** J Goldie 9 9-9....................................... **P Mulrennan** 87
2 (9) 1-L3LL **ROGUE ALLEGIANCE (32) (C&D)** D O'Meara 3 9-9 .... **K Shoemark** 74
3 (1) 824234 **POP STAR (112) (D)** I Jardine 5 9-9.. **A Mullen** 86
4 (7) 0916/07 **PINEAPPLE ISLAND (31)** S Spencer 6 9-9.. **D Swift** 74
5 (6) 525066 **BRIGHT (32) (C&D) (T)** M Loughnane 5 9-7.................... **B Loughnane** 87
6 (2) 7-30L22 **MAXI BOY (10) (C,D)** Fionn McSharry 8 9-5 .... **C J Orr(3)** 88
7 (4) 634233 **MONSIEUR KODI (27) (D,F)** R Fahey 6 9-4......................... **E Tindall(7)** 87
8 (3) 024651 **JUDGMENT CALL (10) (C&D)** Miss L Perratt 7 9-2..........**Kaiya Fraser** 86
9 (5) 971203 ● **STIRRUP CUP (37) (D)** T Easterby 3 9-1......................... **S B Kirrane** ★89
10 (8) 7977L0 **HABRDI (10) (D)** R Carr 4 8-8 .... **JP Sullivan** 86

BLINKERS: No. 9 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 3, 9 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 7, 10.
SP FORECAST: 10-3 Judgment Call, 9-2 Stirrup Cup, 5 Maxi Boy, 6 Monsieur Kodi, 7 Pop Star, 8 Bright, 10 Arnhem, 14 Rogue Allegiance, 20 Others.
2024: Pals Battalion 3-9-11, David Nolan 5-2 Fav (D O'Meara), drawn (10), 11 ran.

5.45 WIN WITH BETMGM'S GOLDEN GOALS HANDICAP
£3,716 (5) 1m 5yds (13)

1 (13) 57L367 ● **STARLINER (9) (C)** Miss L Perratt 4 9-12 .... **P Mulrennan** 74
2 (11) 672555 **MAUI BREEZE (10)** W Storey 3 9-9.....................................**Paula Muir(3)** 77
3 (2) L1327L **JESMOND DAWN (16) (C,D)** G Tuer 4 9-9..............................**O Stammers** ★79
4 (8) 350451 **LUMINOUS WARRIOR (12) (D) (T)** D Cunha 3 9-8 ....**Doubtful**
5 (4) 54455L **SAMRA STAR (9) (C)** Miss L Perratt 4 9-8.............................**Kaiya Fraser** 74
6 (3) 3-59339 **RENEWABLE DREAM (95)** S Spencer 3 9-8 .... **G Sanna(5)** 76
7 (5) 111113 **SECOND FIDDLE (35) (C&D)** I Jardine 6 9-6 .... **M Tabti(5)** 72
8 (10) 224213 **FRANCESI (7) (C&D) (T)** A Carroll 6 9-4.......................**Myla Coppins(7)** 76
9 (12) 050596 **THE COOKSTOWN CAFU (10) (C&D)** F McSharry 6 9-4 **O McSweeney** 71
10 (6) 955222 **POWERFUL RESPONSE (10) (C,D,F)** G Harker 5 9-4 .... **S B Kirrane** 77
11 (7) 62L464 **MERAPI (16) (T)** E Walker 3 9-4 .... **K Shoemark** 74
12 (1) 13622L **RAINWATER (16) (D)** R Fahey 4 9-3 .... **W Fentiman(5)** 78
13 (9) 335535 **ALPINE SIERRA (13) (C,D)** J Goldie 7 8-11.......................... **B Loughnane** 74

TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 4, 7 CHEEK PIECES: No. 10.
SP FORECAST: 4 Powerful Response, 9-2 Second Fiddle, 5 Francesi, Merapi, 10 Alpine Sierra, 12 Starliner, The Cookstown Cafu, Jesmond Dawn, Rainwater, 20 Others.
2024: Paris Lights 5-9-10, David Nolan 11-2 (P Midgley), drawn (12), 11 ran.

6.15 BEST ODDS GUARANTEED AT BETMGM HANDICAP (DIV 1)
£4,711 (6) 7f 14yds (9)

1 (8) 225467 **COOPERATION (33) (D)** K Scott 7 9-9.. **D Keenan** 68
2 (7) 514660 **CLOCH NUA (16) (C,D)** Mrs Stella Barclay 6 9-7 ....**Z Wheatley(3)** 72
3 (1) /8-4237 ● **ROOSKA (52)** G Tuer 5 9-6...**O Stammers** 69
4 (5) 2L3055 **MAPLEDURHAM (39) (F) (T)** E Walker 3 9-5 .... **K Shoemark** ★74
5 (2) 734033 **INSTANT BOND (13) (T)** M Wigham 4 9-3............................ **P Mulrennan** 70
6 (3) 73035L **LAW DEGREE (20) (D)** T Easterby 3 9-2.................................. **S B Kirrane** 71
7 (9) 561474 **ELETTARIA (73) (C&D)** J Wainwright 6 8-13 .... **C Hardie** 67
8 (4) 446486 **RORY (13) (C,D)** J Goldie 7 8-9 .... **Lauren Young(5)** 63
9 (6) 3L00L **SOGANNIE (10)** R Carr 4 8-9 .... **JP Sullivan** 47

VISOR: No. 8 CHEEK PIECES: No. 6 HOOD: No. 1.
SP FORECAST: 2 Instant Bond, 4 Mapledurham, 6 Rooska, 7 Cooperation, Elettaria, 8 Others.
2024: Angel Of Antrim 4-9-10, Andrew Mullen 5-4 Fav (Jack Morland), drawn (5), 12 ran.

6.45 BEST ODDS AT BETMGM HANDICAP (DIV 2)
£4,711 (6) 7f 14yds (9)

1 (1) 233623 **BOMB SQUAD (9) (D)** J Mackie 7 9-9 .... **C Fallon** 69
2 (8) 232702 **LITTLE TED (33) (C)** T Easterby 8 9-7.. **S B Kirrane** 68
3 (3) 0/4-L **CORDELIN (27)** J Norton 4 9-7.. **A Brookes(3)** –
4 (7) L64145 **WYVERN (9) (C,D)** P Morris 6 9-5 .... **D Nolan** ★71
5 (4) 746573 **ANA EMARAATY (13) (C)** J Goldie 5 9-4.................................. **P Mulrennan** 70
6 (2) 032647 ● **STROBELIGHT (11) (T)** G Boughey 3 9-2......................... **B Loughnane** 69
7 (9) 898414 **CABLE BEACH (11) (D,F)** T Tate 4 8-12 .... **A Elliott** 68
8 (5) 609708 **FIDGET LADY (41)** R Fahey 3 8-9 .... **C Hardie** 57
9 (6) LLL99L **BOVEY BELLE (53)** Olly Williams 3 8-9 .... **D Fentiman** 50

BLINKERS: Nos. 5, 6, 9 TONGUE STRAP: No. 6 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 1, 2, 4.
SP FORECAST: 3 Bomb Squad, 7-2 Ana Emaraaty, 4 Little Ted, 5 Wyvern, 11-2 Cable Beach, 8 Others.
2024: Angel Of Antrim 4-9-10, Andrew Mullen 5-4 Fav (Jack Morland), drawn (5), 12 ran.

7.15 CREATE YOUR BET BUILDERS AT MIDNITE HANDICAP
£4,711 (6) 6f (9)

1 (2) 4105L0 **MAYO COUNTY (11) (C&D)** J Camacho 4 9-9.......**T Kiely-Marshall(5)** 67
2 (9) 742269 **ATOMIC MASS (38) (D)** M & D Easterby 3 9-9 ....**B Garritty** 69
3 (5) 31L-L87 **HOWZAK (24) (C&D)** L Bailey 7 9-9.. **P Mulrennan** 58
4 (4) 209371 ● **GOLDMOYNE (13) (C&D) (T)** James Owen 5 9-8................. **C Fallon** 69
5 (6) 611169 **SPUN TO GOLD (9) (C&D)** J Goldie 4 9-8................. **Lauren Young(5)** ★72
6 (8) LL1737 **ARDADDY (17)** G Tuer 3 9-6..**O Stammers** 71
7 (7) 732211 **YORKSHIRE GLORY (9) (C&D,F)** B Haslam 4 9-1 .... **A Mullen** 69
8 (3) 021L00 **SANDS OF DUBAI (10)** R Fahey 3 8-13 ....**B McHugh** 70
9 (1) 084327 **TOOTSIE (37) (T)** P McEntee 3 8-12 .... **B Loughnane** 70

CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 1, 4, 9 HOOD: No. 8.
SP FORECAST: 11-8 Goldmoyne, 5-2 Yorkshire Glory, 10 Spun To Gold, 12 Others.

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS & PRICES

CATTERICK: Good

12.18—COULDBEAWEAPON (T Midgley, 6-1) 1; Bridge Court (2-1 fav) 2; Grandad's Cap (4-1 2nd fav) 3. H'cap 7 ran. ns, 5l. (S England). Tote: £7.00; pl £3.00, £1.50. exacta: £22.80. trifecta: £105.80. CSF: £19.27.

12.53—KAKA'S COUSIN (Jonjo O'Neill Jr, evens fav) 1; Ballyeaston (13-8 2nd fav) 2; Centurion's Sister (4-1) 3. 6 ran. 2¼l, 11l. (J & A O'Neill). Tote: £2.00; pl £1.20, £1.10. exacta: £3.00. trifecta: £4.60. CSF: £3.12.

1.28—SUPREME GEORGE (T Gillard, 7-2) 1; Classical Sting (5-6 fav) 2; Galidam (11-4 2nd fav) 3. H'cap 4 ran. 9½l, 4l. (D McCain). Tote: £4.50; exacta: £7.80. trifecta: £10.90. CSF: £7.33. Non-runner: Powerofjet.

2.03—NINNA COLLINA (Sean Quinlan, 13-8 fav) 1; Crystal Days (3-1) 2; Eastern Shores (10-1) 3. 7 ran. 4¼l, 2¼l. (J O'Keeffe). Tote: £2.63; pl £1.40, £1.90. exacta: £7.40. trifecta: £29.50. CSF: £6.92. Non-runners: Flight To Bresil, No Tricks At All.

2.38—VALENCE D'AUMONT (D McMenamin, 10-3 fav) 1; Mersey Street (9-2) 2; Scottish King (11-1) 3. H'cap 14 ran. shd, 3¾l. (J Parkinson & S Smith). Tote: £4.40; pl £1.90, £2.50, £4.00. exacta: £24.80. tricast: £160.60. trifecta: £205.90. CSF: £19.84. Non-runner: Stonegate.

3.13—SOLDIEROFTHESTORM (Jonjo O'Neill Jr, 9-4 fav) 1; Wasthatok (13-2) 2; Escort'kheops (10-1) 3. H'cap 14 ran. 1¾l, 3½l. (J & A O'Neill). Tote: £3.25; pl £1.70, £2.10, £3.70. exacta: £23.90. tricast: £136.15. trifecta: £202.80. CSF: £18.96. Non-runner: Book of Secrets.

Jackpot: £10,000.00, with £1,247.21 carried over.
Placepot: £129.80
Quadpot: £39.80

LEOPARDSTOWN: Yielding-good to yielding in places

12.10—LAZARE DE STAR (J W Kennedy, 6-4 fav) 1; Le Moulin Rouge (16-1) 2; Cluain Chormaic (40-1) 3. 15 ran. 4¼l, 2¾l. (G Elliott). Tote: €2.50; pl €1.40, €3.10, €8.50. exacta: €18.80. trifecta: €932.70. CSF: €31.83. Non-runner: Mighty Park.

12.45—THE NAGGER REIDY (M Kenneally, 9-2 fav) 1; Hgranca De Thaix (22-1) 2; King In Love (25-1) 3; Rockonliam (15-2) 4. H'cap 23 ran. ns, 1½l, 1¼l. (Stephen Gerard Carey). Tote: €5.70; pl €1.80, €5.90, €6.50, €2.90. exacta: €162.20. tricast: €2392.28. trifecta: €1295.20. CSF: €113.98. Non-runners: Aurea Fortuna, Coyote Spirit, Paul Collins.

1.20—KOKTAIL DIVIN (D J O'Keeffe, 11-4 2nd fav) 1; Kiss Will (2-1 fav) 2; Shuffle The Deck (5-1) 3. 9 ran. 21l, 4l. (H De Bromhead). Tote: €3.75; pl €1.30, €1.30, €1.70. exacta: €9.30. trifecta: €52.30. CSF: €9.30.

1.55—TEAHUPOO (J W Kennedy, 5-2 2nd fav) 1; Bob Olinger (11-1) 2; Ballyburn (13-8 fav) 3. 8 ran. 7l, 7l. (G Elliott). Tote: €3.50; pl €1.30, €2.00, €1.10. exacta: €21.00. tricast: €56.21. trifecta: €65.20. CSF: €29.31.

2.30—AFFORDALE FURY (S Ewing, 7-1) 1; I Am Maximus (50-1) 2; Galopin Des Champs (6-5 fav) 3. 11 ran. 2½l, ¾l. (N Meade). Tote: €8.40; pl €2.20, €5.00, €1.20. exacta: €383.90. tricast: €707.94. trifecta: €1632.70. CSF: €297.92. Non-runner: Croke Park.

3.05—DUKE SILVER (Hugh Horgan, 25-1) 1; Yeah Man (7-2 fav) 2; Small Town Hero (7-1) 3; Intent Approach (9-2) 4. H'cap 18 ran. ¾l, 4l, ½l. (J P O'Brien). Tote: €32.70; pl €5.10, €1.80, €2.10, €1.90. exacta: €229.70. tricast: €739.25. trifecta: €654.50. CSF: €118.94. Non-runners: Colonia Victoria, Son Of Anarchy.

3.40—BENTRAGHHILL (Miss J Townend, 2-1 2nd fav) 1; Nine Toes Tim (13-2) 2; Lemmy Caution (6-5 fav) 3. 11 ran. 4¼l, 4l. (W P Mullins). Tote: €3.00; pl €1.10, €1.90, €1.10. exacta: €13.20. trifecta: €25.10. CSF: €15.70. Non-runners: City Of Cork, The Bossman About.

Placepot: €9.60

LEICESTER: Hurdle: soft-good to soft in places; chase: good-good to soft in places

12.05—ROI DU RISK (B J Powell, 15-8 2nd fav) 1; Three Dons (14-1) 2; Orderoftheday (8-11 fav) 3. 7 ran. ½l, 2½l. (Miss H Knight). Tote: £2.88; pl £1.30, £3.40. exacta: £21.30. trifecta: £30.30. CSF: £25.05.

12.37—BALLYMACKIE (S Bowen, 5-6 fav) 1; Moor End (4-1 jt 2nd fav) 2; Kapamazov (4-1 jt 2nd fav) 3. H'cap 8 ran. 6l, 6l. (O Murphy). Tote: £1.84; pl £1.20, £1.30, £1.30. exacta: £5.20. tricast: £10.01. trifecta: £15.40. CSF: £5.56.

1.12—CASA LOUPI (C Quinn, 10-11 fav) 1; Bigz Belief (10-3 2nd fav) 2; Borna Gem (5-1) 3. 5 ran. 8½l, nk. (G & J Moore). Tote: £1.91; pl £1.20, £1.50. exacta: £3.60. trifecta: £12.90. CSF: £4.45. Non-runners: Dance In The Park, Gavin.

1.47—RODNEY (C Deutsch, 4-1) 1; Two To Tango (10-3 2nd fav) 2; Plantaroma (4-1) 3. H'cap 6 ran. 6½l, 2½l. (Kerry Lee; 11-4 fav Jackpot Cash). Tote: £5.00; pl £2.30, £1.80. exacta: £20.20. tricast: £55.19. trifecta: £78.60. CSF: £18.14. Non-runners: Moodofthemoment, Pep Talking.

2.22—JHENTONG ENKI (C Pritchard, 5-6 fav) 1; Smile Back (6-1) 2; Stamina Chope (14-1) 3. H'cap 10 ran. 2½l, 1¾l. (B Pauling). Tote: £1.84; pl £1.10, £2.00, £2.60. exacta: £6.90. tricast: £45.89. trifecta: £47.80. CSF: £7.02.

2.57—HEEZTHEBOY (J Hogan, 9-2) 1; The Bluesman (10-11 fav) 2; Miralago (9-1) 3. H'cap 6 ran. 1½l, 11l. (G Hanmer). Tote: £5.50; pl £1.90, £1.10. exacta: £11.10. tricast: £33.37. trifecta: £49.80. CSF: £9.78. Non-runners: Lylian, Stratagem.

3.32—DOUBLE OBAN (S Bowen, 9-4 2nd fav) 1; Bingoo (7-2) 2; Gentleman Toboot (4-5 fav) 3. H'cap 4 ran. 5½l, 17l. (O Murphy). Tote: £3.25; exacta: £9.20. trifecta: £9.70. CSF: £9.99.

Placepot: £15.00
Quadpot: £5.10

LIMERICK: Hurdle: heavy; chase: soft to heavy

12.30—KING RASKO GREY (D Mullins, 16-5 2nd fav) 1; Shuttle Diplomacy (18-1) 2; Kaiser Ball (13-2) 3; I Started A Joke (evens fav) 4. 18 ran. 2¾l, 3l, ½l. (W P Mullins). Tote: €4.30; pl €1.30, €3.90, €1.90. exacta: €62.80. trifecta: €492.60. CSF: €60.78. Non-runner: Clonsast.

1.05—YOU PROOF (D Mullins, 3-1 2nd fav) 1; King's Bucks (4-5 fav) 2; Minella Emperor (11-1) 3. 13 ran. 1½l, 4¾l. (W P Mullins). Tote: €4.50; pl €1.30, €1.10, €2.50. exacta: €8.10. trifecta: €33.70. CSF: €6.30. Non-runner: Kaiser De Chanay.

1.40—FINAL DEMAND (Mr P W Mullins, 1-3 fav) 1; Gold Dancer (12-1) 2; Western Walk (100-1) 3. 4 ran. 8l, 2¾l. (W P Mullins). Tote: €1.34; exacta: €4.10. trifecta: €13.40. CSF: €4.89.

2.15—BALLYBAWN BELTER (S D Torrens, 6-1) 1; Uncle Pat (4-1) 2; El Champo (9-1) 3. H'cap 8 ran. 11l, 1¾l. (Liz Doyle; 11-4 fav Dee Capo). Tote: €7.00; pl €1.70, €1.40, €2.40. exacta: €41.40. tricast: €216.71. trifecta: €200.30. CSF: €31.51. Non-runners: Nowwhatdoyouthink, Rebel Gold.

2.50—JOYAU DE THAIX (J C Gainford, 25-1) 1; Collaborative (8-1) 2; Kir (28-1) 3; From The Ashes (8-1) 4. H'cap 16 ran. 1¼l, hd, 1½l. (P Nolan; 7-2 fav Roc My Haarth). Tote: €32.20; pl €6.00, €2.20, €5.70, €2.20. exacta: €570.70. tricast: €5669.84. trifecta: €697.10. CSF: €223.49. Non-runner: Thegraveyardbookie.

3.25—DALMATIC (G B Noonan, 15-2) 1; Gaelic Des Chastys (3-1 fav) 2; Likable Chancer (40-1) 3; Great Island (12-1) 4. H'cap 18 ran. ns, 3l, ½l. (W J O'Doherty). Tote: €11.50; pl €2.20, €1.50, €5.70, €3.00. exacta: €49.00. tricast: €925.61. trifecta: €1360.50. CSF: €32.03. Non-runners: Ardera Gun, Connemara Shore, Wakey Wakey Man.

3.55—ROJUCO MAC (Mr A D Bustin, 5-6 fav) 1; Looking For Eight (5-2 2nd fav) 2; Timesareachanging (4-1) 3. 7 ran. ¾l, 11l. (C Byrnes). Tote: €1.84; pl €1.10, €1.40. exacta: €4.60. trifecta: €8.20. CSF: €3.38. Non-runners: Burning Ability, Detroit Maverick, Home By The Sea.

Placepot: €149.20

SOUTHWELL: Standard

1.00—FIGHT YOUR CORNER (H Crouch, 5-2) 1; Nicator (2-1 2nd fav) 2; Cerelia (15-8 fav) 3. 10 ran. ¾l, hd. (J Tate). Tote: £3.70; pl £1.50, £1.20, £1.20. exacta: £10.30. trifecta: £32.80. CSF: £8.11.

1.35—ELIGIBLE (Joanna Mason, 10-1) 1; I'm Workin On It (9-2) 2; King David (7-2 2nd fav) 3. H'cap 9 ran. 1l, nk. (M & D Easterby; 3-1 fav Onemorenomore). Tote: £11.00; pl £3.20, £2.10, £2.10. exacta: £62.60. tricast: £193.08. trifecta: £206.50. CSF: £55.81.

2.10—LAKE COMO (B Loughnane, 11-10 fav) 1; Raging Raj (13-8 2nd fav) 2; Phantom Watch (13-2) 3. H'cap 4 ran. 2l, nk. (G Boughey). Tote: £2.10; exacta: £3.80. trifecta: £6.70. CSF: £3.22.

2.45—ALL MOONSHINE (Jason Watson, 9-2) 1; Bowfell (4-7 fav) 2; Thequietman (4-1 2nd fav) 3. 8 ran. 2¾l, ½l. (A Balding). Tote: £5.50; pl £1.70, £1.10, £1.60. exacta: £11.70. trifecta: £27.10. CSF: £8.02.

3.20—HUNKY DORY (A Rawlinson, 6-4 fav) 1; Your Love (10-1) 2; Em Four (11-1) 3. H'cap 8 ran. 1¼l, ¾l. (M Appleby). Tote: £2.50; pl £1.30, £3.20, £3.10. exacta: £22.30. tricast: £124.28. trifecta: £178.90. CSF: £18.22. Non-runner: El Bufalo.

3.50—SAX APPEAL (B Loughnane, 6-5 fav) 1; Bashful Boy (6-1 co 2nd fav) 2; Dance Time (7-1) 3. H'cap 9 ran. 3l, 6½l. (C Johnston). Tote: £2.20; pl £1.10, £1.90, £1.70. exacta: £9.70. tricast: £37.97. trifecta: £29.70. CSF: £9.23.

4.20—ZIGGY'S TRITON (D Nolan, 11-2) 1; Hiya Maite (15-8 fav) 2; Toolatetonegotiate (15-2) 3. H'cap 9 ran. 1¼l, nk. (D O'Meara). Tote: £6.50; pl £2.00, £1.10, £2.70. exacta: £22.80. tricast: £80.72. trifecta: £93.10. CSF: £16.87. Non-runners: Alligator Alley, Twilight Jet.

4.50—MR NUGGET (R Scott, 10-3 fav) 1; Knight Of Magic (12-1) 2; Stipulation (4-1 2nd fav) 3. H'cap 12 ran. 1½l, 2¼l. (D M Simcock). Tote: £4.34; pl £1.30, £3.20, £2.30. exacta: £38.80. tricast: £173.73. trifecta: £222.00. CSF: £47.15. Non-runner: Stoneacre.

Placepot: £8.60
Quadpot: £3.90

Fab Gab fightback has Luke sweating

LUKE HUMPHRIES survived a thrilling fightback before cutting German giant Gabriel Clemens down to size.

Cool Hand Luke cruised into a 3-0 lead without being at his destructive best, but in a dramatic slump he survived darts from Clemens to make it 3-3 before taking out 81 to seal a 4-2 win.

Relieved Humphries said: "I was panicking there but coming through that could be the

BY **MIKE WALTERS**

difference between me being world champion again or not.

"I kind of enjoy playing in these games because they test you and you have to find the best version of yourself. Gabriel played fantastic."

Humphries was outgunned on most key metrics – Clemens averaged 101.49, hit nine 180s and produced three ton-plus checkouts, all superior stats to the No.2 seed. But Humphries (below) produced a 170 big fish and a 52 percent strike rate on the doubles was just enough to sustain his challenge, and in the last 16 he will meet Nathan Aspinall or Kevin Doets.

In the first match of the evening session, Gian van Veen eased to a 4-1 win against Madars Razma. Van Veen clinched victory with a 125 checkout but he said: "I don't feel like one of the elite players yet – before the tournament I had never won a game here.

"As a Dutchman I'm in the shadow of Michael van Gerwen, as a young player I'm in the shadow of Luke Littler and that suits me because not all the pressure is on me."

ROB PLAN TO KEEP TIGHT LID ON LITTLER

Cross brushing up to pounce if 'Ronseal' champ misses a spot

BY **MIKE WALTERS**

ROB CROSS claims Luke Littler is like a tin of Ronseal – a polished act, he does exactly what it says on the tin, but you can deck him.

The 2018 world champion booked a fourth-round showdown against Luke the Nuke tonight with a stunning 4-0 whitewash of Aussie No.1 Damon Heta.

And the former electrician, known as Voltage, insists His Nukeship is not unbeatable, saying: "There's no pressure on me - if I lose to Luke Littler, who cares? But if I go up there with a positive mindset, I hope I can get a tune out of myself and who knows what can happen?"

Cross, who has slipped down the Professional Darts Corporation order of merit to No.20, is still a dangerous customer on his day – as Heta found out to his cost.

The Aussies may have trounced England in 11 days to retain the Ashes before producing that strip of light rough in Melbourne, but Cross put them in their place at the World Championship. And comparing defending champion Littler (below) with fence paint may sound like a back-handed compliment, but it is hard to disagree with the analogy.

Cross, 35, said: "Realistically, I need to start well. If I can hit top gear, I think we are all capable, it's whether you can deliver on that day.

"It's not about him, it's about me. He's going to be like Ronseal, he does exactly what it says on the tin. I've got to expect that.

"If he starts a bit slow, I need to jump on it. When you are up there, you need to shine.

"I'm a little bit edgy at times. I definitely have to hold my own nerves together. I spent the first couple of sets a little bit cold. I'm sure when it is needed it will come out. So far I have been clinical at important moments, but there are a few more gears left."

Littler has yet to drop a set in this year's tournament - and after his 25-minute wipe-out of slowcoach Mensur Suljovic on Saturday night, the 18-year-old believes it is possible to go all the way without conceding one.

Phil 'The Power' Taylor reached the final in 2000 without a blemish in the 'sets against' column before a 7-3 win against Dennis Priestley to lift the trophy at the Circus Tavern.

And Littler, who averaged 107 against Suljovic – his best performance at the World Championship – fancies travelling the same path.

He said: "Obviously not losing a set, it's always a good thing. Can I go through the whole tournament without dropping one? It's possible.

"To average 107 is laying down a marker, but I'd probably say 80 or 90 percent of the time, I won't come back here and hit 107 again because it's darts, we don't always play this way.

"We don't always play high numbers. Sometimes it's just about getting the job done. But yeah, I think that was a statement made."

PADDYPOWER
DIAMOND DRAW COMPETITIONS
FLUIDITY
TARGET

HIGH VOLTAGE Cross stunned Heta, now he is aiming to shock Littler

Anderson has Watt it takes in the end... just

THRILLER Anderson can finally celebrate

GARY ANDERSON sent for the stretcher-bearers after a tie-break thriller against Jermaine Wattimena and admitted: "I need to go and lie down."

Only Michael van Gerwen (76) has made more appearances at Alexandra Palace than

BY **MIKE WALTERS**

the Flying Scotsman (68) and we will miss Anderson's lugubrious Lothian tones when he is parked in the sidings.

But at 55, Anderson's gift for unfurling gripping entertainment at the PDC World Championship remains undiminished - and his 4-3 eclipse of Wattimena was a classic.

He squandered five match darts to win 4-1 and 4-2 before edging a nerve-jangling tie-break 5-3 after missing double 12 for a nine-darter which would have earned him a £60,000 bonus in the seventh leg of the decider. Anderson, who was a preposterous 50-1 with the bookies to win a third world title before the first dart landed 18 days ago, is now down to as little as 16-1.

He said: "I bottled a lot of doubles there, including that one at double 12 for a nine-darter. I was getting a bit excited. It's not often I get excited up there and panic stations were setting in.

"The old heart was pounding at the end - get the stretcher ready. I'm going to lie down now. I knew that double 12 was miles off."

SPORT IN BRIEF

Premier League

CRYSTAL PAL (0) ... 0 TOTTENHAM (1) ... 1
Att 25,186 Gray 42
SUNDERLAND (1) ... 1 LEEDS (0)............ 1
Adingra 28 Calvert-Lewin 47
Att: 46,675

AFRICA CUP OF NATIONS—Group C: Nigeria 3 Tunisia 2, Uganda 1 Tanzania 1. **Group D:** Benin 1 Botswana 0, Senegal 1 Congo DR 1. **Group E:** Algeria 1 Burkina Faso 0, Equatorial Guinea 0 Sudan 1. **Group F:** Gabon 2 Mozambique 3, Ivory Coast 1 Cameroon 1.

BASKETBALL

SLB: Leicester 75 London 83, Bristol 86 Surrey 87, Cheshire 116 Manchester 90, Newcastle 79 Caledonia 87.

DARTS

PDC PADDY POWER WORLD CH'SHIP (Alexandra Palace)**—3rd rd:** K Ratajski (Pol) bt W Plaisier (Ned) 4-3, L Woodhouse (Eng) bt A Gilding (Eng) 4-1, J Clayton (Wal) bt N Zonneveld (Ned) 4-3, A Harrysson (Swe) bt R Pietreczko (Ger) 4-2, J Hurrell (Eng) bt S Bunting (Eng) 4-3, L Littler (Eng) bt M Suljovic (Aut) 4-0, R Searle (Eng) bt M Schindler (Ger) 4-0, R Cross (Eng) bt D Heta (Aus) 4-0, G Anderson (Sco) bt J Wattimena (Ned) 4-3, G van Veen (Ned) bt M Razma (Lat) 4-1, L Humphries (Eng) bt G Clemens (Ger) 4-2.

ICE HOCKEY

ELITE LEAGUE: Coventry 0 Cardiff 5, Dundee 1 Glasgow 4, Guildford 3 Manchester 2, Nottingham 4 Sheffield 3, Fife 4 Belfast 3 (SO).

RUGBY UNION

Gallagher Prem Rugby

BATH .... 21 NORTH'PTON 41

Bath—T: du Toit (2), Dunn. **C**: Russell (3). **Northampton—T**: Freeman (3), McParland, Pollock (2). **C**: Belleau (4). **P**: Belleau.

BRISTOL .... 36 NEWCASTLE........ 27

Bristol—T: Rees-Zammit (2), Moroni, Heward, Ravouvou, Oghre. **C**: Jordan (2), Williams. **Newcastle—T**: McCallum, Spencer (2), Leatherbarrow. **C**: Connon (2). **P**: Connon.

GLOUCESTER...... 21 SARACENS.......... 30

Gloucester—T: Thomas, Clark, W. Knight. **C**: Byrne (3). **Saracens—T**: Dan, McFarland (2), van Zyl. **C**: Farrell (2). **P**: Farrell (2).

EXETER............... 24 LEICESTER.......... 10

Exeter—T: Fisilau, Ridl, Varney. **C**: Slade (3). **P**: Slade. **Leicester—T**: Henderson. **C**: Searle. **P**: Searle.

	P	W	D	L	B	F	A	Pts
North'pton ..	8	6	1	1	7	281	232	33
Exeter	8	6	1	1	6	243	138	32
Bath............	8	6	0	2	7	280	185	31
Bristol.........	8	6	0	2	5	263	215	29
Leicester.....	8	5	0	3	6	231	203	26
Saracens.....	8	4	0	4	10	282	198	26
Sale	8	3	0	5	6	239	235	18
Harlequins...	8	2	0	6	2	168	251	10
Gloucester...	8	1	0	7	4	169	280	8
Newcastle ...	8	0	0	8	1	128	347	1

UNITED RUGBY CHAMPIONSHIP: Connacht 24 Ulster 29, Edinburgh 3 Glasgow 21, Munster 8 Leinster 13, Zebre 23 Benetton Treviso 37.

	P	W	D	L	B	F	A	Pts
Stormers.....	7	7	0	0	4	218	87	32
Munster	8	6	0	2	6	180	139	30
Cardiff	8	6	0	2	6	179	141	30
Glasgow	8	6	0	2	5	206	102	29
Ulster..........	7	5	0	2	7	231	164	27
Leinster	8	5	0	3	5	187	174	25
B Treviso.....	8	4	0	4	2	159	214	18
Lions...........	7	3	0	4	5	203	212	17
Connacht	7	2	0	5	8	172	168	16
Blue Bulls....	7	3	0	4	3	184	211	15
Edinburgh ...	7	2	0	5	5	143	133	13
Ospreys.......	8	2	1	5	3	163	204	13
Sharks	7	2	1	4	2	134	192	12
Zebre	8	2	0	6	3	144	240	11
Dragons	8	1	2	5	3	151	225	11
Scarlets	7	2	0	5	1	121	169	9

RFU CHAMPIONSHIP: Caldy 34 Ampthill 29, Cornish Pirates 14 Ealing Trailfinders 41, London Scottish 34 Doncaster 10, Worcester 26 Chinnor 27.

TODAY'S DIARY

(7.45pm unless stated)

Sky Bet Championship: Birmingham v Southampton (8.15, Live on Sky Sports Football), Coventry v Ipswich (6pm, Live on Sky Sports Main Event), Leicester v Derby, Middlesbrough v Hull, Millwall v Bristol City, Norwich v Watford, Oxford Utd v Swansea, Portsmouth v Charlton, Sheffield Wednesday v Blackburn, Stoke v Sheffield Utd, West Brom v QPR, Wrexham v Preston.

Sky Bet League One: AFC Wimbledon v Exeter, Barnsley v Lincoln City, Blackpool v Rotherham, Bolton v Mansfield, Bradford v Port Vale, Burton v Wigan, Cardiff v Stevenage, Huddersfield v Northampton, Luton v Leyton Orient, Peterborough v Reading, Plymouth v Wycombe, Stockport Co v Doncaster.

Sky Bet League Two: Accrington v Harrogate Tn, Bristol Rovers v Barnet, Cheltenham v Swindon, Chesterfield v Cambridge Utd, Crawley v Bromley, Gillingham v Colchester, Grimsby v Shrewsbury, MK Dons v Notts County, Newport Co v Crewe (7.30), Salford City v Fleetwood, Tranmere v Barrow, Walsall v Oldham.

Africa Cup Of Nations—Group A: Comoros v Mali (7pm), Zambia v Morocco (7pm). **Group B:** Angola v Egypt (4pm), Zimbabwe v South Africa (4pm).

WORLD OF SPORT

Bryson in 'shock' at Koepka leaving LIV

BY **DANIEL BLACKHAM**

GOLF

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU has revealed his "shock" at Brooks Koepka's abrupt exit from LIV Golf.

Koepka rocked the golfing world last week when he declared he would be leaving the Saudi-backed tour ahead of schedule – his deal was initially set to run through the 2026 season.

Discussing Koepka's exit, DeChambeau told the Flushing It podcast that while the decision itself did not catch him off guard, the timing did.

KOEPKA

"There was always rumblings, but ultimately, it was a shock when I saw it," he said. "I was like, 'Whoa, all right, well, didn't know it was going to happen today. I didn't have that on my bingo card for the 23rd of December'.

"There's also, people can look at it as an opportunity. I always look at it as when one door closes another opens, right? I think that's what we're thinking of, at least from my perspective."

THE BIG PICTURE

JAW-DROPPING: New Orleans' Jose Alvarado hits Mark Williams of Phoenix in the NBA

CYCLING

THIBAU NYS claimed a hard-fought victory in the eighth round of the UCI Cyclocross World Cup after a final lap shoot-out in Dendermonde.

The home favourite left it late before storming to the front of the breakout pack of 10 riders to edge Dutchman Tibor Del Grosso and World Cup leader Laurens Sweeck.

Nys took full advantage of the absence of world champion Mathieu van der Poel to claim his fifth win of the season. "I rode the corners perfectly, and that really gave me a kick," Belgian Nys told Sporza.

"This used to be my trademark. From my junior years onwards, I was known for taking control in the final lap.

"That's something I've struggled with in recent years. It had been a long time since I could win a race like this."

10 to tackle

1. Which club lost their first five games in this season's UEFA Champions League league phase?
2. **What is the distance, in feet and inches, from the face of the dartboard to the throw line in darts?**
3. Who won the SX2 class races in Buenos Aires and Vancouver, the opening Grands Prix of the 2025 FIM Supercross World Championship?
4. **Which golfer won the US Open by eight shots in 2011?**
5. Which debutant hit 171 for New Zealand in the first innings of their first Test against England in 2013?
6. **Which Colombian WBA flyweight champion had two title fights against Dave McAuley in Belfast in 1987 and 1988?**
7. Which American male tennis player won consecutive Australian Open titles in the 1990s?
8. **Which American city hosts the world's oldest annual marathon?**
9. Which American swimmer won gold in the men's 100m backstroke at the 2004 and 2008 Olympics?
10. **Which French city is famous for its annual 24-hour motor race?**

RATINGS
0-3 Oh dear
4-6 Small beer
7-9 So near
10 Sporting Seer

ANSWERS: 1 Ajax. 2 7ft 9¼in. 3 Max Anstie. 4 Rory McIlroy. 5 Hamish Rutherford. 6 Fidel Bassa. 7 Jim Courier. 8 Boston. 9 Aaron Peirsol. 10 Le Mans.

Root backs Baz and Co to deliver on promise

JOE WARNS AGAINST AN ASHES CULL

BY **RORY DOLLARD** in Melbourne

JOE ROOT insists England's players remain "absolutely committed" to the current regime after an overdue Ashes win in Melbourne eased some of the mounting pressure.

Head coach Brendon McCullum and managing director Rob Key faced questions over their future after England surrendered the urn with three consecutive defeats, but the prospect of a whitewash is now gone after a two-day victory at the MCG.

Having stemmed the bleeding with a first win in 19 Tests in Australia, they have one more chance to end a damaging tour on a positive note, when they head to Sydney for the New Year Test.

But the England and Wales Cricket Board will still be asking what went wrong and what changes need to be made when the dust settles.

Root knows all about the pressure, leaving his role as captain a few months after the 4-0 defeat in the 2021-22 series, a trip which also ended the reigns of head coach Chris Silverwood and managing director Ashley Giles. And he has launched a staunch support of McCullum and Key.

Root said: "In terms of the playing group, we're absolutely committed to the management. They've been outstanding.

"So I think it would be silly [to overlook] the amount of hard work and things that have been done. You look at the group of players that we've got and you look at the guys that were involved in the team when I was captain four years ago – every single one of them has improved as a player.

"This team has improved as a team."

FIRST CLASS Root's century in Brisbane

There have already been admissions from those at the top that the pre-series preparation was not up to scratch, and a pledge from Key to look into the team drinking habits after reports that their break in Noosa resembled a 'stag do'.

A sharper focus on skills coaching may also be incoming after an initial attempt to downsize the backroom team, but Root feels the good work must not be swept away.

"Clearly there's always going to be things to do and things to work on and, yes, we can be better," he said.

"There's certain areas that we'll continue to keep working at but the management work extremely hard. They might do things in a slightly different way and it might appear different to what we're used to as an English team, but I think we've made great strides as a group and a big reason for it is because of the guys that we have behind us.

"It's been a very different approach and different way of doing things, but there's been a considerable move forward."

While the main aim was bringing the Ashes back home, Root has finally ticked off two notable omissions from his CV. After hitting his first Test century on Australian soil in Brisbane he has now experienced a Test victory Down Under.

"I didn't want to come here and lose another Ashes series," he said. "It's disappointing we've lost the series, but it's really important that we managed to get the right side of the result here.

"It would be better if we win next week as well. Every time you get the opportunity to represent your country, is a huge privilege, huge honour. If we can build on it and do it again next time it's momentum in the right direction for the next tour here."

Head goes in to bat for rival Duckett

FROM **RORY DOLLARD**

TRAVIS HEAD revealed he sent a message of support to Ashes rival Ben Duckett after the England batter found himself on the end of a social media backlash.

Footage appearing to show an intoxicated Duckett in a tetchy late night conversation with a fan during the team's mid-break in Noosa placed an unwanted spotlight on the opener. Hours earlier, managing director Rob Key had called excessive drinking "completely unacceptable" and said he would be investigating reports of what happened.

England captain Ben Stokes publicly backed Duckett, and Head felt compelled to check in with an opponent he has got on well with ever since their time as Under-19s.

"I get along with Ducky well, I reached out to him to see if he was going all right," he said after England's two-day win.

"Everyone is still human. What you do in personal time is up to you. I know we live a high-profile life... but at the end of the day it was a bit stiff [unfair].

"Everyone made a lot more out of it than there should have been. [The video] was from one of his own as well, I reckon it was an England fan. I don't think it was any real issue.

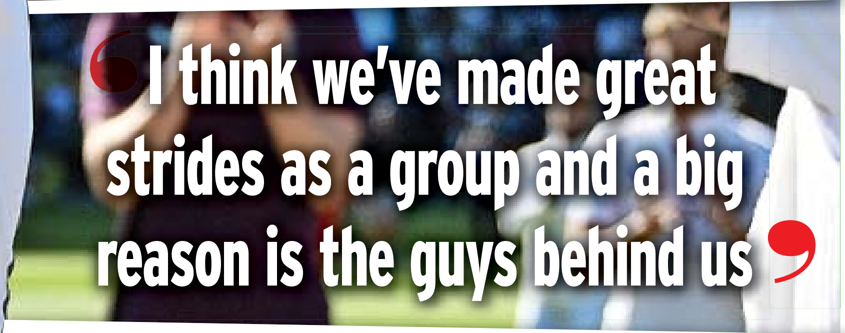
"When there's big gaps in Tests people have got to find something to talk about. Hopefully we can play a bit longer next week."

After scoring 34 in the second innings to help England to a four-wicket win, Duckett posted a picture of himself clapping the travelling England fans, writing: "Amazing end to a pretty tough week."

OLD PALS Duckett and Head in the first Test

SUPPORT GROUP Root hails the England fans after a win Down Under at last

GETTING TO GRIPS McCullum (left) with skipper Ben Stokes after the win in Melbourne eased some pressure



> ‘I think we've made great strides as a group and a big reason is the guys behind us’

TALKING POINTS Rob Key (left), speaking with Ben Duckett before the fourth Test, has questions to answer after the tour

HUGH MOURNED

BY **DAVID CHARLESWORTH**

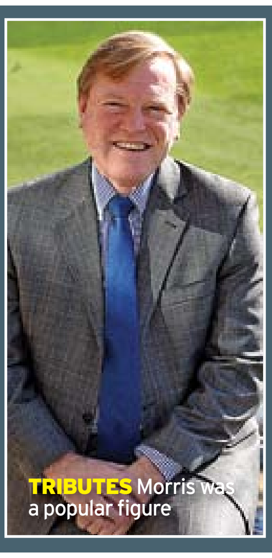
HUGH MORRIS, the England and Glamorgan batter who went on to hold senior positions with country and county, has died aged 62.

Morris became Glamorgan's youngest captain aged 22 before returning later, leading them to the Sunday League title in 1993.

After ending a 17-year playing career, which included three Test caps, Morris had a series of roles at the England and Wales Cricket Board.

He served as England's first managing director from 2007 to 2013, after which he had nine years as Glamorgan CEO. He was diagnosed with bowel cancer in 2022.

Dan Cherry, who succeeded Morris at Glamorgan, said: "The club, Welsh cricket and the game as a whole has lost a great player, a tireless administrator, and a fine human being."



TRIBUTES Morris was a popular figure

Book is thrown at Page

FROM **RORY DOLLARD**

THE man responsible for the MCG pitch has admitted he was left in "a state of shock" as wickets tumbled during England's two-day Ashes victory.

The early finish could cost Cricket Australia about £5million in lost revenue, with more than 90,000 tickets to refund for day three, and head curator Matthew Page has faced the music. "We're obviously really disappointed that it's gone for two days," he said.

"I was in a state of shock after the first day. To see everything that happened and 20 wickets in a day, I've never been involved in a Test match like it and hopefully will never be involved in a Test match like it again.

"It was a roller-coaster ride for two days, to see everything unfold. We know that this hasn't gone as we had planned."

RUGBY LEAGUE

Brierley can't wait to learn as CEO at reborn Salford

BY **JOSH McALLISTER**

RYAN BRIERLEY admitted he jumped at the opportunity to be part of the new Salford phoenix club, even though it has left him little time to reflect on the fact it brings an end to his playing career.

The full-back has hung up his boots to become CEO, working alongside Mason Caton-Brown after the former winger spearheaded the winning bid to relaunch Salford.

Brierley made close to 100 appearances for the Red Devils and captained his boyhood club before leaving for Oldham amid Salford's crisis-hit 2025.

The former Super League club were wound up by the High Court over outstanding debts at the start of December.

"From a personal perspective, I was really hurt with what happened last year," Brierley said. "Once I left Salford, I'd fallen out of love because of how much it hurt. To see it broken bit by bit, it was soul destroying and it knocked my confidence.

"I just felt that if I could help or use my platform and profile to help, I couldn't let the club die – that wasn't an option.

"I didn't know what role or capacity I fell into, I just wanted to help and offer my services.

"When someone offers you the chance to be a part of saving Salford, you don't say no."

Brierley is a FIFA-licensed agent, having established The Player's Player in 2020 – a sports management company that counts Manchester United and Lionesses star Jess Park among its clients.

Holding a master's degree in sports business management and studying sports directorship, Brierley says he is constantly seeking learning opportunities, including reaching out to fellow club CEOs.

"I've spoken to Kris Radlinski [at Wigan, below] quite regularly throughout my playing career, and he's always loved the fact that I was a little bit different," Brierley said.

"I like the way Wigan do things – though it's a bit different, as they've got a multi-millionaire business owner. It's a little bit different to what we've got, but the principles remain.

"I'm a young CEO and I'll keep learning, and I'll be reaching out to people – and not just in rugby.

"I'm really blessed and privileged to be in this position where people want me to do well."

Brierley played alongside Caton-Brown at Toronto Wolfpack, with the pair now set to lead the new Salford club alongside Malcolm Crompton and Paul Hancock.

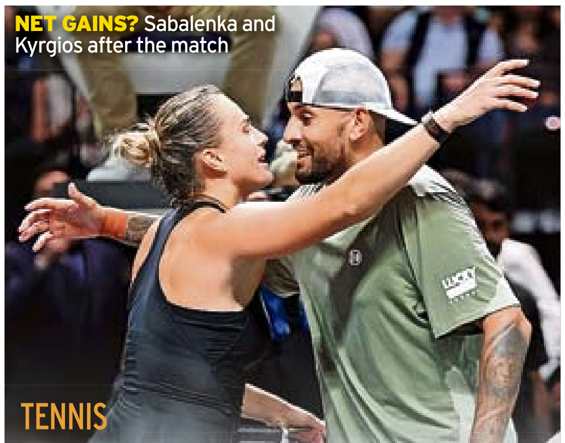
They face a race against time to prepare for their scheduled Championship season opener against Oldham on January 16, although Brierley insists he will not pull the boots back on.

"When I left Oldham, it was with a commitment to the CEO role at Salford," he said.

"I've not had time to reflect on retirement.

"I've had a lot of messages about being proud of my career, and it's just not crossed my mind."

IN SAFE HANDS Brierley, playing for Salford in February, is back as CEO



NET GAINS? Sabalenka and Kyrgios after the match

TENNIS

Opinion is divided as Kyrgios wins in Battle of the Sexes

BY **IAN PARKER**

NICK KYRGIOS took victory in the controversial 'Battle of the Sexes' as he beat women's world No.1 Aryna Sabalenka.

The 2022 Wimbledon finalist, who has slipped to 671st in the rankings after three injury-hit years, had too much for Sabalenka, who was unable to get into her rhythm.

Kyrgios looked tired but still prevailed 6-3 6-3 in Dubai as he mixed power with his usual array of unorthodox shots that kept Sabalenka guessing.

He said: "She broke my serve numerous times and I had to strap in."

Coming five decades after Billie Jean King famously beat Bobby Riggs – a significant moment in the fight for greater equality in sport, in Houston in September 1973 – the merits of this contest divided opinion.

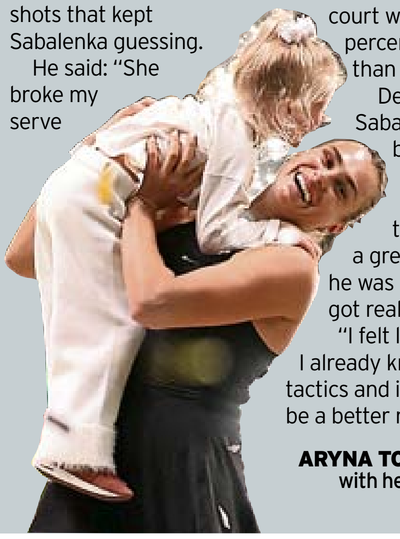
Kyrgios added: "It truly is a spectacle, and a great stepping stone forward for the sport of tennis."

Both players had only one serve, while Sabalenka's half of the court was nine percent smaller than Kyrgios'.

Despite defeat, Sabalenka would be keen for a rematch.

She said: "I think I put up a great fight and he was struggling, he got really tired.

"I felt like next time, I already know the tactics and it's going to be a better match."



ARYNA TOUR Sabalenka with her goddaughter Nicole in Dubai

Bubbly Chiefs can give England some Fisi pop

EXETER	24
LEICESTER	10

EXETER HERO GREG IS TIPPED FOR BIG THINGS

BY **DUNCAN BECH**

GREG FISILAU has been backed to catch England's attention after he inspired Exeter to victory.

Fisilau scored the Chiefs' opening try, helped set up the decisive score for Stephen Varney and was named man of the match for an impactful afternoon in attack and defence.

The 22-year-old No.8 has appeared for England A, but Exeter attack coach Dave Walder insists it is only a matter of time before Steve Borthwick takes a closer look at a player who has been in blockbusting form this season.

"I love working with Greg," said Walder. "He's got everything you'd want from a back rower. He's physical, he's abrasive, very game-smart, but he's also got lovely soft skills.

"He's playing very well at the moment. If he keeps playing like that, I'd imagine England can't ignore him, but you'd have to ask them that question."

Exeter finished 2024 bottom of the Prem table but sign off 2025 in second place following a remarkable transformation.

Top spot was theirs for the taking but the bonus point they needed slipped through their fingertips after the ball was spilt over the line twice in the closing moments, limiting them to three tries for the afternoon.

"This morning if you'd offered us a win, we'd have taken it," said Walder.

"But I think deep down we're a bit disappointed with our accuracy and not to score ourselves an extra bonus point.

"At the same time that's a sign of where we've come from and where we are at the moment. We're not too focused on where we are in the league, it's about the process. The boys are working hard and have a great attitude and defence. We're in a really positive place."

Leicester head coach Geoff Parling read Tigers the riot act at half-time following a poor opening 30 minutes and the former England lock felt they had failed to do themselves justice.

"It was the poorest we have been emotionally in turning up for a game," said Parling.

"It's the first time this season that we have lacked a bit of edge, especially in that first 30 minutes.

"When we got quick ball and speed of ball we looked dangerous, but I have to look at how we prepped the week.

"We're not good enough yet to have those off days. That's the first time, and the group will admit it, that we weren't quite on edge in terms of our collisions and how we were playing.

"We're back at home against Saracens now and we've got to play with the right edge because that for me wasn't our DNA today."

POWER SURGE Exeter star Greg Fisilau scores the opening try

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ARSENAL 2
Odegaard 14, Rutter og 52
BRIGHTON 1
Gomez 64

GYOK NEEDS RAYA LIGHT

Viktor's toil an issue for leaders as David saves

BY **NEIL MCLEMAN**

ARSENAL returned to the top of the Premier League thanks to their goalkeeper – and not their big-money centre-forward.

And now manager Mikel Arteta has to decide if Viktor Gyokeres will still lead the line tomorrow against fellow title challengers Aston Villa.

Brighton head coach Fabian Hurzeler claimed David Raya (right) is "one of the best goalkeepers in the world" after the Spaniard's stunning late save from Yankuba Minteh secured a nervy win for the Gunners.

But after dominating the first hour, the three points and a calmer finale should have been long assured.

Former Seagulls striker Gyokeres had a clear early chance but his side-footed effort was more like a backpass. And the £64million summer signing was replaced by Gabriel Jesus after a frustrating 71 minutes where he was just not on the same wavelength as his team-mates.

So far, the Sweden star has not been the answer to Arsenal's No.9 problem. And though there is only a two-point gap between the Gunners and Manchester City, there is a striking difference between the two main forwards.

Erling Haaland has scored a ridiculous 38 goals in 29 games for club and country, while Gyokeres has been outscored by own goals in the Premier League for Arsenal since September. Gary Lineker said on his The Rest Is Football podcast: "Viktor Gyokeres has come in and I look at him and I don't want to be rude but he's not in the same league as Haaland."

Even Ollie Watkins, who Arsenal tried to sign last January, returned to form with two goals at Chelsea. And Hugo Ekitike and Nick Woltemade – or even a return of Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang – would have proved better summer signings.

Kai Havertz will soon return from a knee injury, while Mikel Merino offers another forward option, maybe against Unai Emery's side.

Arsenal keep winning – that is six consecutive Premier League home wins – but they cannot keep relying on donations like Georginio Rutter's header from a Declan Rice corner.

That is four consecutive games now – Wolves, Everton, Palace in the Carabao Cup and now Brighton – where they have won by a single goal or needed penalties.

Steve Nicol told ESPN FC: "You need a goalkeeper like Raya to win the league. To make a save like that is basically two points. But there is no question that their biggest problem is up front."

Martin Odegaard did score his first club goal of the season after 14 minutes but said: "We should have scored more goals. It should have been a bigger margin in the end.

"We got the win and we got the three points but obviously we would have liked it to have been a bit less stressful towards the end."

But a win is a win, no matter how ugly for an injury-hit side which deployed Declan Rice at right-back. And they remain in pursuit of the Quadruple.

Gabriel Jesus, who won four Premier League titles with City, said: "Since I arrived in this league, I think my lowest position was third.

"One piece of advice is keep going. If we manage to win games when we don't play well, that's a good sign. Because at the end when you win the title you don't look at this game and say, 'Oh we didn't play well and then we won'. No, you take the three points because it can make you the champions in the end."

SWEDEN SOUR Gyokeres battles for the ball against Brighton, where he again lacked a goal threat

PREMIER LEAGUE

ARSENAL		BRIGHTON
53%	POSSESSION	47%
6	SHOTS ON TARGET	3
8	SHOTS OFF TARGET	3
450	TOTAL PASSES	407
7	CORNERS	2
1	OFFSIDE	1
7	FOULS	13
0 🟥 2 🟨	CARDS	3 🟨 0 🟥

REFEREE: John Brooks

LINE-UPS

ARSENAL (4-3-3): Raya; Rice, Saliba, Hincapie, Lewis-Skelly (Gabriel 71); Odegaard, Zubimendi, Merino; Saka, Gyokeres (Jesus 71), Trossard (Martinelli 82).

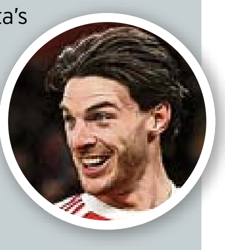
BRIGHTON (3-4-2-1): Verbruggen; Coppola (Watson 87), Van Hecke, Dunk; Kadioglu, Ayari, Hinshelwood (Welbeck 75), De Cuyper (Wieffer 46); Gruda (Minteh 46), Gomez (Kostoulas 87); Rutter.

MAN OF THE MATCH
MARTIN ODEGAARD

Rice response to emergency is joy to Ode

MARTIN ODEGAARD has insisted Arsenal are "ready to do whatever it takes" to win the Premier League after Declan Rice's performance as an emergency right-back.

Jurrien Timber withdrew on the eve of the Gunners' 2-1 victory against Brighton – which restored their two-point advantage over Manchester City at the top – with a suspected ankle injury.



Ben White's continued absence saw Rice (below) fill in at full-back, while Mikel Arteta's defensive problems carried over into the warm-up with Riccardo Calafiori forced to pull out moments before kick-off.

"That's just our team," Odegaard said. "Everyone is ready to do whatever it takes, and that [Rice's performance] was another good example of that."

Arteta said after the nervy win that the club – who have faced a series of injuries this season – are already in survival mode.

With Timber and White both unavailable on Saturday, Rice, who has been one of the standout midfielders in the league this term, could be required to play out of position again when Arsenal host third-placed Aston Villa tomorrow.

"It was an unbelievable performance from him [Rice]," said Odgeaard of his team-mate's display against Brighton.

"To play right-back, probably the first time in his life, and then do it the way he did it was unbelievable."

'WE LACKED COURAGE'

BY **NEIL McLEMAN**

FABIAN HURZELER claimed Brighton did not have enough "courage or personality" in their first-half showing against Arsenal.

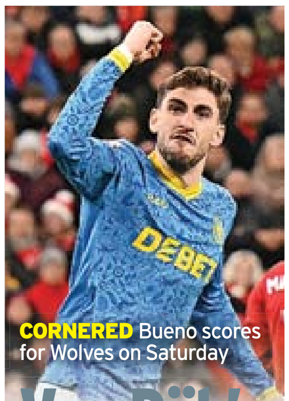
The German made two changes at the break and Sergio Gomez's 64th-minute strike ensured a tight finish.

But the Seagulls are now winless in five games ahead of tomorrow's trip to West Ham.

Hurzeler (right) said: "In the first half we were too passive, we weren't brave enough and didn't play with enough courage or personality.

"We didn't start well and weren't able to push out. It was a mix of believing in our own quality and pressing – and that's what we missed.

"But we need to stick to the match plan for 90 minutes, not just 45."



CORNERED Bueno scores for Wolves on Saturday

Van Dijk's set-piece Red alert

FROM BACK PAGE

their set-piece balance – the difference between goals scored and conceded - now standing at minus nine, the worst figure in the division.

Arne Slot was blunt in his assessment of a fundamental problem that has cost the Reds 12 Premier League goals – 10 more than Tottenham and Brentford at the other end of the scale.

"Unfortunately, we are maybe the only team that hardly ever scores from a set piece and, even worse, we constantly concede [from them]," the Liverpool head coach said.

And Van Dijk added: "I'd say at least 75 percent of the time - or even more - it's not even about the first contact, it's the second phase that is the killer.

"Is it a mental thing? I hope not. If that's in your head then it's an issue."

It is a marked change from last season, when only six teams conceded fewer set-piece goals than the Reds.

Yo needs more time

YOANE WISSA is still not ready to make regular starts for Newcastle.

The forward has had an injury-hit start on Tyneside after his £50million switch from Brentford, damaging knee ligaments while on duty with DR Congo in September, and had to wait until December 6 to make his debut.

He has still only made one start – scoring in the Carabao Cup win against Fulham on December 17.

Toon head coach Eddie Howe said: "With our schedule playing every three, four days, I don't think he's in a condition where he could start regularly. Hopefully we can manage him to that point at some stage."

MARVEL

Gray's first goal lifts the gloom at Spurs and pressure on boss Thomas

HEADING FOR GLORY Gray is well placed to nod home from close range and earn Spurs victory

PREMIER LEAGUE

C PALACE		TOTTENHAM
62%	POSSESSION	38%
2	SHOTS ON TARGET	4
8	SHOTS OFF TARGET	3
543	TOTAL PASSES	336
3	CORNERS	2
1	OFFSIDES	3
7	FOULS	5
0 3	CARDS	2 0

REF: Jarred Gillett **ATT:** 25,186

LINE-UPS

C PALACE (3-4-2-1): Henderson; Lerma, Lacroix, Guehi; Clyne (Nketiah, 58), Hughes, Wharton, Mitchell; Devenny (Esse, 85), Pino (Uche, 77); Mateta.

TOTTENHAM (4-2-3-1): Vicario; Porro, Danso, Van de Ven, Spence; Gray (Dragusin, 85), Bentancur; Kudus (Johnson, 85), Bergvall (Palhinha, 62), Kolo Muani (Odobert, 63); Richarlison.

MAN OF THE MATCH
MICKY VAN DE VEN

PREMIER LEAGUE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal	18	13	3	2	33	11	42
Man City	18	13	1	4	43	17	40
Aston Villa	18	12	3	3	29	19	39
Liverpool	18	10	2	6	30	26	32
Chelsea	18	8	5	5	30	19	29
Man Utd	18	8	5	5	32	28	29
Sunderland	18	7	7	4	20	18	28
Brentford	18	8	2	8	28	26	26
Crystal Palace	18	7	5	6	21	20	26
Fulham	18	8	2	8	25	26	26
Tottenham	18	7	4	7	27	23	25
Everton	18	7	4	7	18	20	25
Brighton	18	6	6	6	26	25	24
Newcastle	18	6	5	7	23	23	23
Bournemouth	18	5	7	6	27	33	22
Leeds	18	5	5	8	25	32	20
Nottm Forest	18	5	3	10	18	28	18
West Ham	18	3	4	11	19	36	13
Burnley	18	3	3	12	19	34	12
Wolves	18	0	2	16	10	39	2

CRYSTAL PALACE 0
TOTTENHAM 1
Gray 42

BY **JOHN CROSS**

THIS time Thomas Frank got a much-needed reward after being made to suffer on the touchline.

In the grand scheme of things, it was hardly the most convincing win for Tottenham but you suspect that will not bother Frank in the slightest.

After a thoroughly dismal run of just one win in their previous eight Premier League games, the spotlight and pressure is on a manager struggling to convince the Spurs fan base he is the right man for the job.

Tottenham fans are crying out for free-flowing, entertaining and attacking football and all they got was a scrappy Archie Gray header from a set piece.

Spurs striker Richarlison had two efforts ruled out for offside after VAR checks – the second in particular was pretty unforgivable – which would have made it altogether more comfortable. How a player who has cost more than £100million in combined transfer fees throughout his career and played for Brazil 54 times can drift offside so frequently is anyone's guess.

And, instead, Tottenham were left to hang on as Frank looked on nervously from the touchline as he will be well aware every game, result and performance is being scrutinised right now.

Frank needs a break and finally got one against a Crystal Palace who wasted a string of big chances themselves as their marathon season threatens to catch up with them even before the turn of the year.

Incredibly, Oliver Glasner's (left) Palace are already up to 30 games played this season and their finishing looked tired and lacking composure.

They are in serious danger of burning out and Tottenham were grateful recipients as the away end celebrated wildly at the final whistle.

Frank ushered his players over to them and you have to respect their fans who were loud, supportive and jubilant despite another season of small wins and bigger disappointments.

In fairness, Gray, aged 19 years 291 days, was a big win this time as he became Tottenham's youngest English goalscorer since Dele Alli, who was four days younger when he scored in January 2016.

Remember that goal? It was Alli's wonder strike – the

ARCH

DAÑSO
4
RICHARLISON
9
DEVENNY
55

overhead flick and volley also at Selhurst Park – which put the former Spurs and England midfielder on the road to superstardom.

That seems a long time ago now for Tottenham and indeed Alli. Well, funnily enough it will be 10 years ago next month and is a reminder how time flies.

Spurs also need an upturn in fortunes – and quick. They looked nervous at the start and took a while to get going while Palace played some nice stuff.

But Richarlison had the ball in the net after 17 minutes, only for VAR to disallow it for an offside against Lucas Bergvall in the build-up. Richarlison might also have drifted offside had they got that far with the VAR. The Brazilian's celebrations suddenly looked a bit daft.

Palace played the better football – the sort of passing game Spurs fans want from their team – but just could not take advantage. Jean-Philpppe Mateta headed over, Will Hughes fired over and Adam Wharton shot straight at Spurs keeper Guglielmo Vicario.

But when you do not take your chances, it generally comes back to bite you. Pedro Porro's deep corner was headed back across goal by Randal Kolo Muani, Richarlison's flick-on fell for Gray, who nodded in from point-blank range.

Palace continued to waste big chances. Justin Devenny hooked over the bar while defender Maxence Lacroix glanced just wide. Richarlison had the ball in the net a second time but had drifted offside again. Wilson Odobert also crashed a shot against the post.

Tottenham made hard work of it – but ultimately got the job done.

FRANK RELIEF AFTER GRITTY WIN

FROM BACK PAGE

worked hard and were very disciplined against a very good Crystal Palace team.

"The consistency in this performance, not everything perfect but it's a good step in the right direction and that's what we need to work on and then get offensive players in form.

"To win here in an up-down season shows a huge mentality effort from the players, they played very disciplined through the game. There have been more dominant away wins but that is a huge quality and when we get the home form better, it will be very good."

Frank also praised Gray (left) for his match-winning display after his own recent struggles for form in defeats.

"Very pleased for him. He shows a lot of character and there has been a lot of growth in him, no doubt about that, he just adds small layers," said Frank, who wants reinforcements in the transfer window.

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RIGHT ROOT

Veteran Joe insists Bazball era should not be hit for six

ASHES LATEST: PAGES 46-47

FISI POPS

Greg turns on style to tame Tigers and spark talk of England call-up

GALLAGHER PREM: PAGE 48

C PALACE 0 1 TOTTENHAM

PALACE HONOUR Archie Gray celebrates with Richarlison after heading his first Spurs goal, which earned a precious victory

FRANKS A LOT, ARCHIE

Gray matters as teen's first goal gives Spurs boss a crucial boost

BY **JOHN CROSS**

THOMAS FRANK admitted it was a "very important win" after Tottenham eased the pressure on their beleaguered boss.

Tottenham midfielder Archie Gray, 19, got the crucial winner with his first goal for the club as Frank's men enjoyed just their second victory in nine Premier League games.

That has left Frank (right) under increasing pressure but the Tottenham head coach praised his players for their "huge mentality" and the way they dug out a precious win.

Frank said: "Very important win, clearly a game where desire beats detail, but I don't think that we hit a top performance.

"But I liked how we dug in,

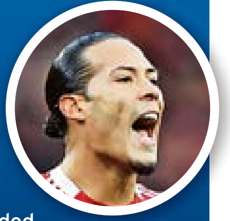
TURN TO P51, COL 4

VIRGIL: WE MUST TURN THE CORNER

BY **ANDY DUNN**

VIRGIL VAN DIJK admits Liverpool's shocking set-piece record is proving to be a "killer".

Yet more dodgy defending allowed Wolves centre-back Santiago Bueno to score at a corner kick, prompting a nervous finale to a win at Anfield that should have been a formality after first half goals from Ryan Gravenberch and Florian Wirtz.



Reds skipper Van Dijk (right) said: "We have defended so many set pieces very well. But the fact is we've conceded too many goals like that and it hurts. We have to improve that.

"It's about repetition, training, analysing... it's something we have to improve."

The goal was just the second Wolves had scored from a set piece in the Premier League this season, with the Midlanders the only club less effective at converting dead-ball situations in the top flight than Liverpool.

No club has conceded more times from such positions than the Reds in the Premier League, with

TURN TO PAGE 50, COLUMN 1

DAILY EXPRESS Fever Pitch
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YOUR PULLOUT FREE INSIDE

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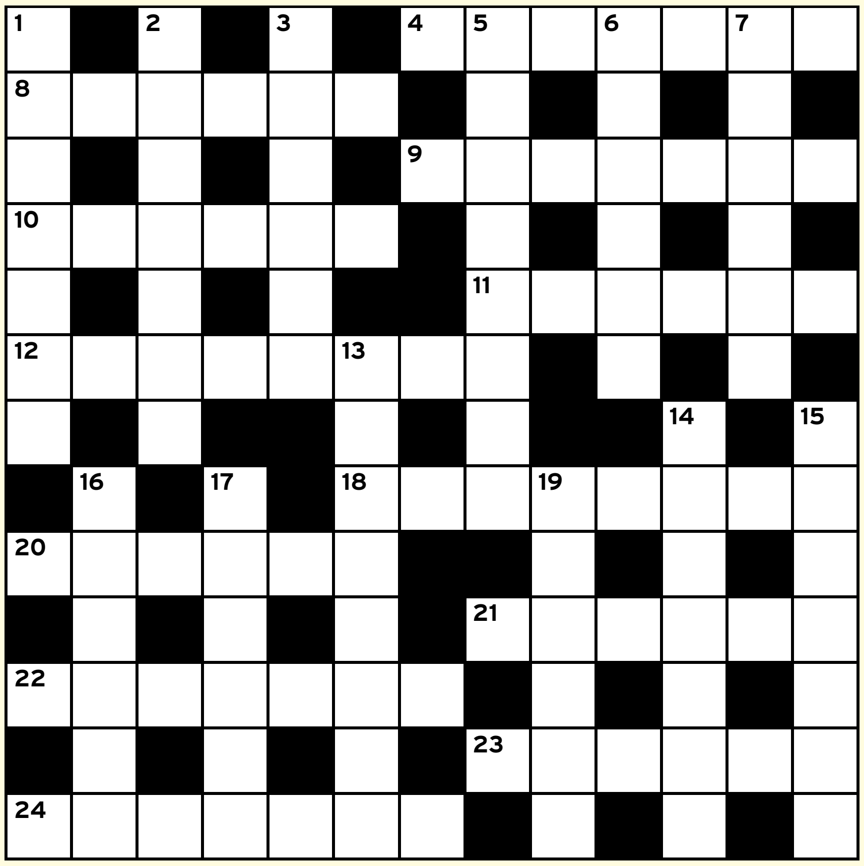
**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

QUICK CROSSWORD



ACROSS
- **4** Progressive (7)
- **8** Cropped up (6)
- **9** Loan (7)
- **10** Out of bounds (6)
- **11** Epistle (6)
- **12** Intertwine (8)
- **18** Premature (8)
- **20** Homily (6)
- **21** Thing (6)
- **22** Edible (7)
- **23** Credence (6)
- **24** Law (7)

DOWN
- **1** Cure-all (7)
- **2** Order (7)
- **3** Stay (6)
- **5** Fragrant (8)
- **6** Shortage (6)
- **7** Bowman (6)
- **13** Armoured glove (8)
- **14** Defect (7)
- **15** Bewilder (7)
- **16** Leave (6)
- **17** Communicate (6)
- **19** Dyed (6)

Solution tomorrow

Stuck on the puzzle? Call **0905 789 4188** to hear individual clues or the full solution

Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. Service provider Spoke Ltd - **Helpline 0333 202 3390*

CROSS DOUBT

Target times: Average: **16 mins**
Good: **12 mins** Excellent: **8 mins**

Stuck? Call for a clue
0901 322 5601
Halve your Target Time!

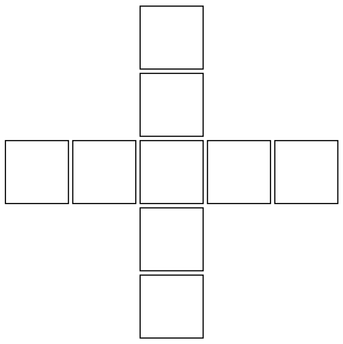
Today's solution
0901 322 5607
Both today's words in a moment!

**Calls cost 75p plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

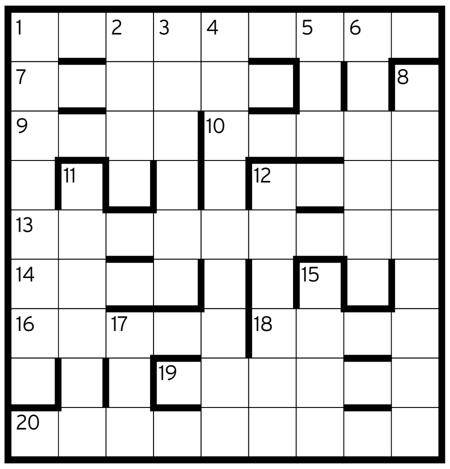
Can you make two common five-letter words from the nine letters given, using each letter only once? You can - but only if one letter features in both words in the squares on the right. There's at least one way to do it, and you have to have the right letter at the crossover - but which one is it?

See if you can find the answer within our target time. If you need help, ring our clue-line below to find out the crossover letter. **Solution tomorrow**

A E H K L N P V Y



SMALL CROSSWORD



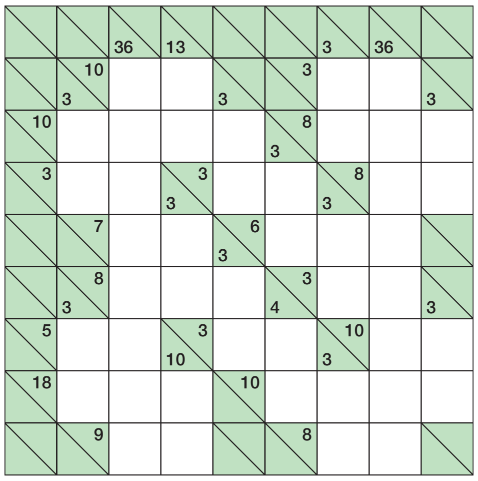
ACROSS
- **1** Little by little (9)
- **7** Myth (6)
- **9** Brother of Cain (4)
- **10** Long low sofa (5)
- **12** Pieces (4)
- **13** Gory pitch (anag.) (9)
- **14** Duty or burden (4)
- **16** Native New Zealander (5)
- **18** Small ornamental case (4)
- **19** Empty a suitcase (6)
- **20** Supposedly lucky item (9)

DOWN
- **1** Eye disease (8)
- **2** Grew older (4)
- **3** Holds up (6)
- **4** Emphasise (9)
- **5** Toilet (informally) (3)
- **6** Hate (6)
- **8** Engaged in an industrial dispute (2,6)
- **11** Small European country (6)
- **12** Arm muscle (6)
- **15** US state (4)
- **17** Paddle (3)

Solution tomorrow

For today's solution call:
0907 181 2582
**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

KAKURO



Fill each sequence of blank squares using the numbers 1-9. Each sequence - across and down - must total the number in the shaded box at the beginning or top of each line. A number may be repeated in each line but NOT in a sequence.

Solution tomorrow

Puzzles

WIN £250

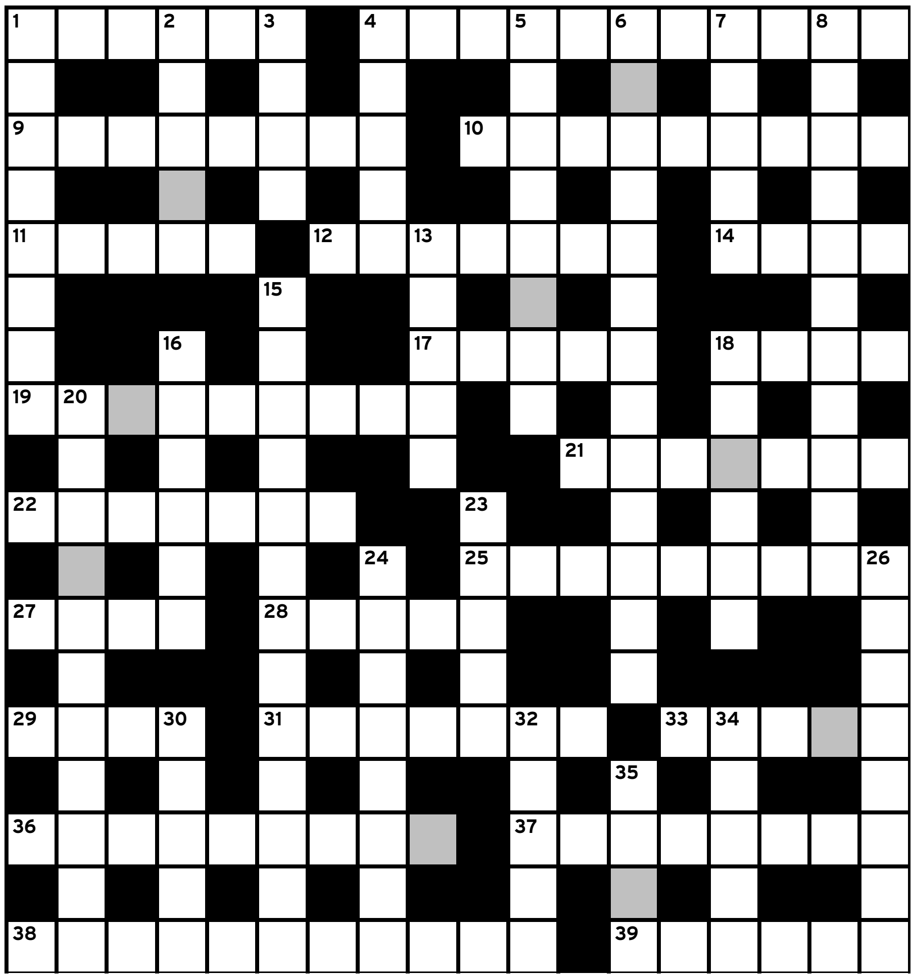
BIG MONDAY CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1 Principal currency unit of Tajikistan, worth 100 dirams (6)
4 'Father of modern drama', whose son Sigurd was prime minister of Norway from 1903 to 1905 (6,5)
9 Home of Spanish writer Miguel de Cervantes' 'ingenious gentleman' Don Quixote (2,6)
10 National flower of Austria and Switzerland, classified as Leontopodium nivale (9)
11 & 28 Across Capital of Ethiopia since 1986, named from the Amharic for 'new flower' (5,5)
12 English novelist whose Something To Answer For won the inaugural Booker Prize in 1969 (1,1,5)
14 Thirty-fourth Pope, preceded by Sylvester I (314-335) and followed by Julius I (337-352) (4)
17 Order of classical Greek architecture whose famous examples include the Parthenon in Athens (5)
18 Hinged or pivoted catch that engages with a ratchet wheel to prevent reverse motion (4)
19 Murdering husband of European folklore popularly associated with the 15th-century French knight Gilles de Rais (9)
21 Of a cell or organism, possessing a complete set of chromosomes from each of its two parents (7)
22 Chief protein-digesting enzyme of pancreatic juice, specifically targeting the amino acids lysine and arginine (7)
25 Specialist in the anatomy, functions and diseases of the ear (9)
27 Part of the body with the technical name genu (4)
28 See 11
29 In physics, the energy transfer that occurs when an object is moved by an external force along a line of displacement (4)
31 Commercial powdered form of sodium carbonate used in the manufacture of soap, paper etc. (4,3)
33 'How sharper than a serpent's ___ it is To have a thankless child!' (Shakespeare King Lear, act 1, sc. 4) (5)
36 British institution founded c. 880 and based in the Tower of London from the 13th century to the early 19th century (5,4)
37 In computing, a unit of digital information storage equal to eight trillion bits (8)
38 Location of Denali (formerly Mount McKinley), the highest mountain peak in North America (6,5)
39 & 4 Down British prime minister who served between the two terms (1964-1970, 1974-1976) of Harold Wilson (6,5)

DOWN

1 Traditional British dessert of whipped cream or milk flavoured with sweet wine and lemon peel (8)
2 Only extant species of the family Giraffidae outside the genus Giraffa, native to the DR Congo (5)
3 Imperial unit of length formerly defined as equalling three barleycorns (4)
4 See 39 Across
5 Smallest, coolest and most common form of star in the universe (3,5)
6 US actress noted for her starring roles in films including Witness (1985) and Top Gun (1986) (5,8)
7 Deep-bodied European freshwater fish of the carp family; Abramis brama (5)
8 Detective hero of a novel series by US author Walter Mosley, played by Denzel Washington in the 1995 film Devil In A Blue Dress (4,7)
13 Enid Blyton character, debuting in 1949, whose friends include Tessie Bear and Bumpy Dog (5)
15 Last inhabited place in the world to welcome the New Year of the Gregorian calendar, located in the southern Pacific Ocean (8,5)
16 Malevolent shape-changing water spirit of Scottish folklore, usually taking the form of a horse (6)
18 In zoology, an animal's coat of fur, hair or wool (6)
20 Oscar-nominated 1992 drama film starring Nick Nolte and Susan Sarandon (8,3)
23 Australia's Phascolarctos cinereus, also known as the native bear (5)
24 Second-largest island in the Mediterranean after Sicily (8)
26 Playing position in American football on either side of the offensive line next to the tackles (5,3)
30 Fermented beer-like low-alcohol drink, made from rye flour or stale bread (5)
32 Any bristle- or hair-like structures on an animal's body, e.g. the pads on a gecko's feet (5)
34 U-shaped bend in a river or stream, forming a lake when it becomes cut off (5)
35 Most numerous of the First Nations peoples of Canada, whose groups include the Nêhiyawak and Nihithaw (4)



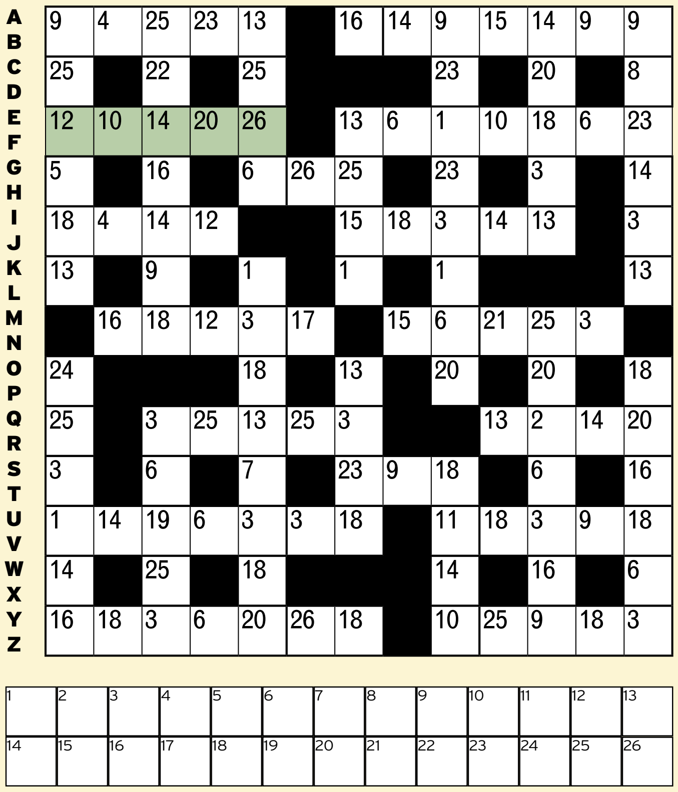
NAME ______

ADDRESS ______

POSTCODE ______

STOP THE CLOCK

THE GREAT ALPHAPUZZLE™ TIME CHALLENGE



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION Across: Run, Implode, CADGE, Riposte, Variety, Blaze, Result, Cherub, Sober, Melodic, Shelter, Equal, Startle, Keg. **Down:** Recover, Sash, Nadir, Subtext, Jeweller, Tor, Martyr, Amoral, Lop, Beholden, Despair, Drunk, Fete, Backlog.

WIN £100

25 MINUTES

Can you beat today's time?

TACKLE the Alphapuzzle™ Challenge – and be in with a chance of a £100 cash prize. FIRST, call the number below and note today's CLUE LETTERS and your unique PIN NUMBER to set your personal stop-watch running. Then, use the clue letters to work out the word in the green squares. When you crack the mystery word, call again and enter your pin number to STOP THE CLOCK. Winner selected at random from all correct entrants who beat the 25-minute Target Time. Each grid number represents a different letter. All 26 letters of the alphabet are used.

Solution next Monday

0907 181 2908

YOUR PIN No. _ _ _ _ _ _

**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. Lines close 23:59 every Sunday.*

£100 Winner (15 Dec):
D Wright, Thatcham.

TO WIN £250 CASH!

read down the letters in the highlighted squares to reveal the mystery word.

TO ENTER CALL: 0904 161 1601

(£1.50 per call plus network extras)

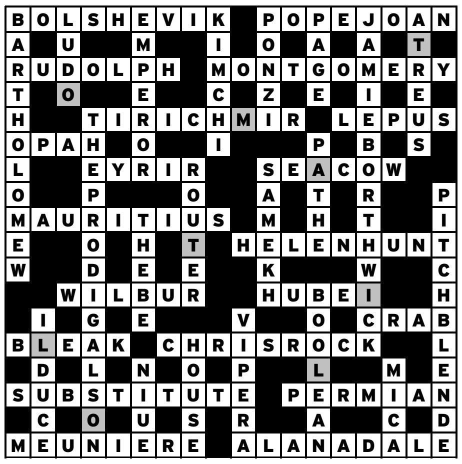
Leave your answer and details, or text **BIGXWORD** followed by a space, your answer, name and address to **88833** (texts cost £1.50 plus your standard network rate) or just complete the crossword correctly and send it to: **Daily Express, Prize Crossword (No 1133), PO Box 8694, Derby DE1 9TW** Competition closes Friday, January 2, 2024 at 11:59pm. Winner picked at random from all entry routes after close date. **NEED HELP?** Call **0904 161 1602** for five extra clues! *Calls are £1.50 plus your telephone company's network access charge.

*SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390.
For any postal enquiries, call this helpline.

BIG MONDAY CROSSWORD SOLUTION AND WINNER

Monday December 15

£250 WINNER:
S Watts, Cornwall.



ARROW-WORD

Arrow-words are like crosswords, but the clues are printed inside squares on the grid. Write your answers in the blank squares in the direction indicated by the arrows.

Solution tomorrow

Leg part Very large scissors		Whip		Treasure _, 1880s novel		Newt		Obi-Wan _ from Star Wars Tease		Talkative					
						Newly-made									
TV presenter, _ Turner		Hot drink		Allow to enter (3,2)						Start or beginning					
						Consume entirely (3,2)	Hard kick								
City in S Spain	Bitterly regret		Nothing	Originally called				However Lacking in quality							
							Sympathy								
Kingdom		Jelly type		_ West, former actress	Also				Container for liquid medicine		The _, English band Tumult		Finish	Paradise	
					Forecasts		In the sky Curving trajectory								
Person in charge	Fencing sword		Ghost Money											Assistance	
						Heavy-hearted		Skin problem		Nimble		_ Walker, pictured Tooth covering			
In favour of				Make more intense or serious									Spanish cry		Chronic drunkard
_ Ditto, pictured		Carbonated water					Largest penguin		Fine lustrous fabric		Signals agreement				
				Exactly the same										TV show, The _ Of Gentlemen	
				Single pace		Repast					Thaw Slightly sticky				
								Outdoor event					Cylinder		Throw of dice
				Lion's cry		Pixie				Lead to the _, marry					
								European Economic Community (abbr.)				Rugby pundit, _ Monye			
				Despot		October (abbr.)				Afghan capital					
								Whichever				Fish type			

WORDSEARCH

E	Y	N	O	I	S	A	V	N	I	E	H	T	K	O
F	M	A	I	S	S	S	R	U	O	H	E	H	T	Q
E	Q	X	W	W	R	U	S	K	U	O	H	Y	J	U
Y	C	A	S	A	D	E	I	D	J	J	J	E	Y	E
I	N	I	O	N	D	E	H	N	L	J	G	J	O	N
U	O	L	L	Y	O	N	A	T	E	U	Y	Y	B	I
T	T	A	Z	A	N	I	A	D	O	G	U	M	R	N
R	G	R	B	B	M	Z	L	R	C	E	B	Q	E	N
E	N	T	X	A	F	O	N	S	A	A	H	W	P	U
S	I	S	V	X	K	I	T	N	T	F	L	T	A	V
P	D	U	T	G	L	O	O	L	I	Q	O	M	P	U
A	D	A	G	U	K	D	E	H	C	T	I	W	E	B
S	A	G	O	E	T	E	E	F	Y	P	P	A	H	C
S	P	M	R	V	Z	W	H	P	Q	V	Q	E	T	H
S	T	R	A	N	G	E	R	L	A	N	D	Z	C	U

NICOLE KIDMAN FILMS

Find all the terms listed below in the grid.

Solution tomorrow

**AUSTRALIA ● BEWITCHED ● DEAD CALM
FAR AND AWAY ● GENIUS ● HAPPY FEET
LION ● MALICE ● MOULIN ROUGE ● NINE
PADDINGTON ● STOKER ● STRANGERLAND
THE HOURS ● THE INVASION ● THE OTHERS
THE PAPERBOY ● TRESPASS**

FRIDAY'S SOLUTIONS

THE ALPHABEATER

Black squares: 1, 3, 6, 8, 10, 17, 22, 23, 24, 25, 31, 35, 38, 39. **Across:** Yellow, Jersey, World, Mug, Earthquakes, Flags, Birth, Extractions, Eel, Pivot, System, Squeak. **Down:** Yummy, Exams, Lodge, Actions, Works, Pie, Prohibitive, End, Bloat, Stinker, Seize, Yawns, Flank.

THE ALPHAPUZZLE

Across: Scholar, Idol, Taunt, Fanfare, Court, Arch, Narrow, Morbid, King, Lowly, Pretzel, Squid, Turn, Unkempt.
Down: Strain, Kaput, Club, Grandeur, Orthodox, Affirm (clue), Goblin, Coalesce, Diatribe, Jump, Leech, Divide.

TV CROSSWORD

Across: 1 Burke, **6** Mars, **8** Murdaugh, **10** Eddie, **11** Cyril, **12** Modern, **15** Adam, **16** Esther, **17** Made, **19** Lazarus, **21** Tina, **22** Betty.
Down: 2 Ugly, **3** Emilia, **4** Hamm, **5** Threlfall, **6** Madeley, **7** She, **9** Richard, **13** Noel, **14** Bathurst, **17** Matt, **18** Elba, **20** Zoe.

TV show: The Forsytes

ARROW-WORD

Across: Geneva, Dram, Sour, Safe, Wetter, Ran, Race, Cry, Rat, Stamina, Meteor, Not, Lead, Age, Amok, Hams, Ivory, Denim, Empress, Ole, Tags, Isis, Beast, Wake, One's, Erin, Ants, Meets.
Down (left to right): Reel, Ammo, Eon, Industry, Team, Pliant, Errata, Seamstresses, Eva, Fen, To-do, Its, Amber, Jar, Kids, Vest, Wee, Harington, Aware, Canoe, Ring, Kit, Get at, Gym, Stens.
Shaded letters: War Horse

WORDS

POWER

MUDDLESOME

Lando Calrissian
Princess Leia
Wedge Antilles

CLOCK-WISE

Goat, Atop, Opts, Tsar, Arlo, Logo

QUIZ OF THE WEEK

1 Now, **2** Welsh, **3** Batman And Robin, **4** Istanbul, **5** 1940s, **6** Italy, **7** Cannibals, **8** Martin Freeman, **9** Surprise Surprise, **10** New Mexico.

DITLOIDS

1 8 Reindeer Pulling Santa's Sleigh,
2 1 Partridge in a Pear Tree,
3 2000 Miles, by The Pretenders,
4 3 Wise Men at the Nativity,
5 12 Days of Christmas,
6 4 Ghosts in A Christmas Carol

TRIVIA WORDSEARCH

1 John le Carré, **2** Tweed, **3** John Mills, **4** Jim Carrey, **5** Charity, **6** Pointless, **7** Truman Capote, **8** Confederate, **9** Sang froid, **10** The Magi

SUMTHING

6x4=24, 3x5=15, 3x9=27

SMALL CROSSWORD

Across: 1 Polish off, **7** Scar, **8** Refer, **10** Fly, **11** Raisin, **13** Intention, **14** Hot dog, **16** Sam, **18** Ideas, **19** Asia, **20** Sunscreen.
Down: 1 Psoriasis, **2** Octane, **3** Irks, **4** Her, **5** Offside, **6** Frying pan, **8** Ruinous, **9** Bitumen, **12** Hoodie, **15** Tsar, **17** Was.

CROSS DOUBT

Across: BINGO
Down: GIANT

SUDOKU EASY

5	7	8	9	4	6	2	1	3
6	2	9	7	3	1	4	8	5
4	1	3	5	2	8	6	9	7
9	6	5	8	7	2	1	3	4
2	3	1	6	5	4	9	7	8
7	8	4	3	1	9	5	6	2
3	4	7	1	6	5	8	2	9
1	9	2	4	8	7	3	5	6
8	5	6	2	9	3	7	4	1

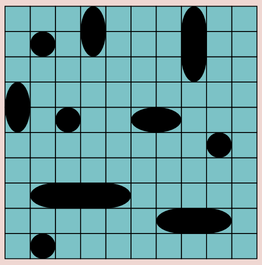
SUDOKU MEDIUM

2	4	3	8	5	9	7	6	1
7	1	8	4	2	6	5	3	9
5	6	9	1	3	7	8	4	2
9	7	2	3	1	8	4	5	6
3	5	1	2	6	4	9	7	8
6	8	4	9	7	5	2	1	3
4	2	7	6	9	3	1	8	5
1	3	5	7	8	2	6	9	4
8	9	6	5	4	1	3	2	7

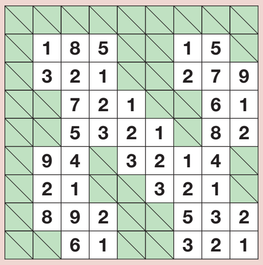
SUDOKU DIFFICULT

6	7	2	3	4	1	5	9	8
1	8	3	2	9	5	4	6	7
9	4	5	7	6	8	2	1	3
5	6	7	1	2	4	8	3	9
8	3	1	6	5	9	7	2	4
4	2	9	8	3	7	1	5	6
3	5	8	9	7	2	6	4	1
7	9	4	5	1	6	3	8	2
2	1	6	4	8	3	9	7	5

BATTLESHIPS

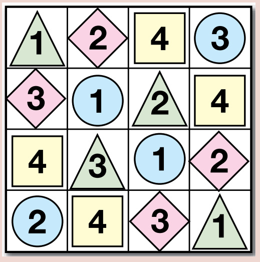


KAKURO



	1	8	5			1	5	
	3	2	1			2	7	9
		7	2	1			6	1
		5	3	2	1		8	2
	9	4		3	2	1	4	
	2	1			3	2	1	
	8	9	2			5	3	2
		6	1			3	2	1

KEIJO



1	2	4	3
3	1	2	4
4	3	1	2
2	4	3	1

QUICK CROSSWORD

Across: 6 Defence, **7** Shade, **9** Petty, **10** Freedom, **12** Expenditure, **14** Acquiescent, **18** Declare, **19** Fault, **21** Stuff, **22** Collect.
Down: 1 Defer, **2** Vertex, **3** Act, **4** Threat, **5** Adjourn, **8** Predict, **11** Revelry, **13** Accepts, **15** Uplift, **16** Nearly, **17** Pluck, **20** Cow.

TARGET

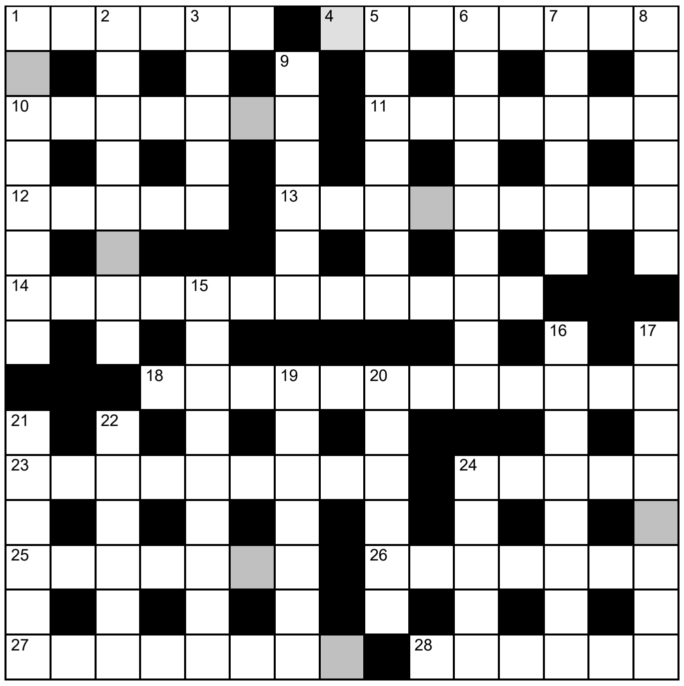
DEPENDING
deed, deep, deign, deigned, denied, depend, DEPENDING, died, diene, dine, dined, ding, dinged, dinned, edge, edged, ended, ending, geed, genned, ginned, indeed, need, needing, pending, penned, pied, pined, pinged, pinned

Puzzles

CRUSADER PRIZE CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Look for gladiator's first weapon (6)
4 Respects new ceremonial items (8)
10 Sodium smell emerging (7)
11 Sell pie – eccentric shape (7)
12 Fight for what's left (5)
13 Switched on performance – bad TV idea (9)
14 The last moment after ten o'clock (8,4)
18 Commercial ships making dealer blue (8,4)
23 A soul man worried about nothing unusual (9)
24 Expand, having succeeded by spring (5)
25 Gull, say, cooked – braised (7)
26 Practicality is included in kingdom (7)
27 Occupants of tannery varied, after time (8)
28 Bitterness spotted around place (6)

DOWN
1 Criminal group ruins rest (8)
2 Mixed, when arranged (8)
3 Caught nobleman backing an undesirable person (5)
5 Feline treatment for the ache (7)
6 European cellar for sport (4,5)
7 Character somehow builds tree up (6)
8 Place – variable but fixed (6)
9 Finally gets ton after book (2,4)
15 Aspect of promotion (9)
16 Go out with Neil, moving between one day and the next (4,4)
17 Cancel my order for a plant (8)
19 He'd crow about a soup (7)
20 Ridiculous bard upset about us coming back in (6)
21 Singer with alien hound (6)
22 I'd moan about Internet address (6)
24 Was recreated politician for waterlogged area (5)



WIN £100 CASH

FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN
Read down the letters in the highlighted squares to reveal the mystery word.

TO ENTER: Call **0904 161 3700** (calls cost £1.50 plus your telephone company's network access charge) and leave your answer and details, or text **DXCRUS** followed by a space, your answer, name and address details to **88833** (texts cost £1.50 plus your standard network rate). Lines close at midnight Saturday. Or send your grid containing the answer in the shaded squares by posting it to: Crusader Crossword, December 29, PO Box 8694, Derby DE1 9TW. Entries must be postmarked by December 30 at the latest. For any postal enquiries, call helpline number. SP: Spoke – 0333 202 3390.
An extra day is given for postal entries during bank holidays.

● ***One weekly winner will be the first random correct entry drawn from all entry routes after the closing date of midnight Saturday. Competition runs Sunday to Saturday. The Editor's decision is final.***

NEED HELP? Call **0904 161 1609** for 5 extra clues! Calls cost £1.50 plus your telephone company's network access charge.

NAME

ADDRESS

POSTCODE

LAST WEDNESDAY'S SOLUTION

ACROSS: 1 Hipster, 5 Applied, 9 Stagnated, 10 Ample, 11 Geordie, 12 Doodles, 13 Pound sterling, 18 Christmas rose, 20 Musical, 23 Austria, 25 Tudor, 26 Great Dane, 27 Ramadan, 28 Torrent. **DOWN:** 1 Has a go, 2 Pea-souper, 3 Toned, 4 Rotterdam, 5 Aided, 6 Piano trio, 7 Impel, 8 Dressage, 14 Unsecured, 15 Testament, 16 Inebriate, 17 Scimitar, 19 Talent, 21 Sedum, 22 Log in, 24 Satyr. **Prizeword:** Passion

TARGET

L	A	C
I	M	L
N	A	Y

● *The Target uses words in the main body of Chambers 21st Century Dictionary (1999 edition)*

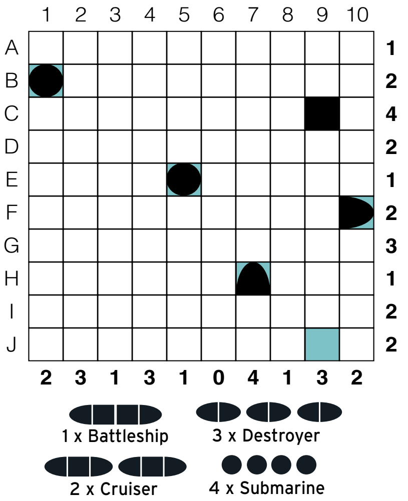
HOW many words of four letters or more can you make from the letters shown here?
In making a word, each letter may be used once only. Each must contain the centre letter and there must be at least one nine-letter word. No plurals. Verb forms ending in S permitted.

TODAY'S TARGET
Good 16; **very good** 24; **excellent** 32 **(or more). Solution tomorrow**

Call **0907 181 2585**
for today's Target solution
**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

BATTLESHIPS

FIND where the fleet of ships shown is hidden in the grid. The numbers to the right of and below the grid indicate how many of the squares in that row are filled in with ships or parts of ships. The ships do not touch each other, even diagonally. Some squares have been filled in to start you off.
Solution tomorrow



THE ALPHABEATER

TARGET TIME: 34 minutes

CAN you crack the Alphabeater? Each grid number represents a letter – or black square. As in Alphapuzzle, every letter of the alphabet is used. But you have to complete the grid too! Use the given letters and black squares below the grid to start. The grid is 'rotationally symmetrical' – in other words, it looks the same if you turn the page upside down.
Solution tomorrow

Extra letter clues
0907 181 2560
(Deduct three minutes for each extra clue letter heard)
Full solution
0907 181 2558
**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

A ~~B~~ ~~C~~ D E F G H I J K L ~~M~~ N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

2	38	8	5	26	21	4	7	32	35	26	31	28
40	37	1	26	2	29	40	38	8	6	34	2	4
4	14	4	9	10	22	15	11	7	26	26	29	21
10	20	16	29	24	37	20	9	10	21	8	10	23
1	30	17	31	15	7	15	8	18	7	25	1	29
36	37	38	7	4	12	1	21	29	23	29	4	11
33	34	15	32	18	29	3	29	17	7	31	19	40
12	21	4	20	3	5	6	13	34	4	19	19	5
37	31	40	7	31	39	33	34	40	2	39	7	16
14	25	16	26	25	12	21	7	24	5	33	20	6
29	20	38	29	4	21	8	26	6	12	35	7	30
21	33	34	1	6	4	25	4	15	4	16	26	31
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21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
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WORD BUILDER

Solution tomorrow

Answer the clues so that each word contains the same letters as the previous word, plus or minus one.

1	☐☐☐	1 Took a seat
2	☐☐☐☐	2 Orient
3	☐☐☐☐☐	3 Cut of meat
4	☐☐☐☐☐☐	4 Light container
5	☐☐☐☐☐	5 Bills
6	☐☐☐☐	6 Sprawl
7	☐☐☐	7 Demand

THE ALPHAPUZZLE®

Alphapuzzle® tests logic and word power. Each grid number stands for a letter. Every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter or letters – below the main grid – to start. **Solution tomorrow**

DIFFICULTY: 7/10; **TARGET:** 24 mins; **CLUE:** Shellac is a shortage, they say.

A B C D E F G ~~H~~ I J ~~K~~ L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

22	■	3	■	25	■	■	■	3	■	3	■	21
14	4	25	26	17	13	■	3	25	4	13	23	4
4	■	4	■	15	■	6	■	14	■	26	■	14
19	4	14	13	26	3	24	■	4	10	18	26	25
26	■	25	■	6	■	14	■	13	■	12	■	11
25	17	2	18	■	20	17	14	22	12	■	■	■
11	■	12	■	1	■	13	■	12	■	22	■	3
■	■	■	9	4	13	26	6	■	2	12	4	13
3	■	16	■	6	■	6	■	3	■	13	■	17
25	14	10	6	5	■	2	4	6	8	10	12	14
10	■	13	■	18	■	12	■	4	■	26	■	5
20	26	13	26	4	2	■	21	14	4	13	6	12
20	■	11	■	7	■	■	■	20	■	12	■	2

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
				K								

14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
										H		

EXTRA LETTER CLUES: 0907 181 2568*
Hear up to six Extra Letters, deduct two minutes for each clue letter heard.
FULL SOLUTION: **0907 181 2565***
ACROSS ONLY: **0907 181 2561*** / DOWN ONLY: **0907 181 2562***
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DAILY EXPRESS

Fever Pitch

ALL THE BEST ACTION, REACTION AND ANALYSIS

SIX OF THE BEST FOR DEADLY DOM

SUNDERLAND 1
LEEDS UNITED 1

REPORT: PAGES 2-3

SHARP SHOOTERS Calvert-Lewin made it six games in a row he has hit the target after Sunderland's Adingra (inset) scored the opener

Calvert-Lewin strikes again to keep his Leeds run going

SUMMER SUN IN FLORIDA LIFTED CITY FOG SAYS PEP

- PAGES 4-5

EUROSPOT

RAS THE CREM OF THE CROP

CREMONESE	**0**
NAPOLI	**2**

Italian Serie A

RASMUS HOJLUND bagged a first-half brace to fire Napoli to victory at Jamie Vardy's Cremonese.

The Manchester United loanee continued his good form in Serie A to take his tally for the season to nine goals in all competitions.

Napoli were ahead after 13 minutes when the ball ricocheted into Hojlund's path for the Dane to strike low into the far corner.

Former United star Scott McTominay had a hand in Hojlund's second as his flick-on fell kindly for the striker to turn home on the stroke of half-time (above).

Meanwhile, it was former Chelsea players who led AC Milan to a 3-0 win over Hellas Verona.

Christian Pulisic volleyed home Adrien Rabiot's header at the far post from a corner to open the scoring in first-half stoppage-time at San Siro. Milan took eight minutes of the second half to grab another two goals as Christopher Nkunku bagged a brace.

JOSE HAILS HIS 2-2 'VICTORY'

SP BRAGA	**2**
BENFICA	**2**

Poruguese Primeira

BY **DARREN WELLS**

JOSE MOURINHO delivered a sarcastic criticism of the officials as Benfica were held at Braga with a winner ruled out by VAR.

Nicolas Otamendi put Benfica ahead with a header but a Rodrigo Zalazar penalty and a strike from Pau Victor swung the match back in Braga's favour before half-time. A long-range curling effort from Fredrik Aursnes pulled Benfica back level early in the second half. But Mourinho was furious when his side saw a third goal disallowed for a foul by Richard Rios (above).

"Coming here to beat Braga 3-2 is a fantastic result," said Mourinho.

"We won 3-2. I saw our third goal from the bench, with the doubt about the distance, but while still on the bench I saw it again and again, probably on the same monitor that VAR was watching. The goal is clean, we won. It was a great victory."

HE'S DOM

Calvert-Lewin strikes at Sunderland to make it six successive games he's found the net

SUNDERLAND	**1**
LEEDS	**1**

BY **REBECCA JOHNSON**

DOMINIC CALVERT-LEWIN equalled a 65-year-old record as his goal grabbed a point for Leeds.

When the forward levelled two minutes after the break at the Stadium of Light, he became the first Leeds player to score in six successive top-flight games since John McCole in 1959-60.

His strike got the visitors level after Simon Adingra scored his first goal since arriving on Wearside.

A point keeps Sunderland unbeaten at home in the Premier League this season. They stay seventh in the table, while Leeds stay 16th.

Leeds named an unchanged team following their win over Crystal Palace and Dennis Cirkin made his first appearance of the campaign for Sunderland in place of Dan Ballard, who was not named in the squad.

Adingra had an effort deflected wide in the opening seconds and goalkeeper Lucas Perri scooped up Nordi Mukiele's header from Granit Xhaka's (left) cross as Sunderland enjoyed a lively start.

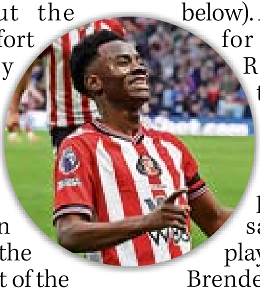
Leeds began to grow into the game and had a chance of their own from a well-worked move around the box, but Anton Stach's strike was saved by Robin Roefs. The hosts were

WAR BABIES
THE FORGOTTEN CHILDREN OF WWII
ON SALE IN ALL GOOD BOOKSHOPS AND AMAZON
AMAZON

IT AGAIN

unable to clear a free-kick, with the ball poked into the path of Noah Okafor, but the forward had his effort deflected over by Mukiele.

Following an even opening, Sunderland broke the deadlock in the 28th minute when Xhaka pounced on the ball as it bobbled out of the box from a long throw and threaded a neat pass into Adingra on the left, where the winger fired home an excellent curling strike (celebrating, below). Ao Tanaka came on for the injured Joe Rodon and Leeds tested Roefs, who caught Jaka Bijol's header.



Another promising move saw Calvert-Lewin play a flicked pass into Brenden Aaronson, who fired low from close range, but Trai Hume cleared off the goal-line. Sunderland had two opportunities to extend their lead just before half-time when Brian Brobbey scuffed his effort and moments later the striker sent a header against the cross-bar from Adingra's cross.

Leeds equalised two minutes into the second half when a quick switch to the right saw Aaronson charge forward and play a low pass into Calvert-Lewin, who stabbed home for his eighth league goal of the season.

All 11 Leeds players touched the ball uninterrupted in the build-up. A frenetic start to the half continued, with the Yorkshire side coming close to taking the lead when Jayden Bogle's effort from Okafor's delivery trickled past a post.

Leeds continued to dominate, with Roefs holding another Bijol header and Tanaka firing wide before the visitors unleashed a wave of attacks, with Ethan Ampadu having a powerful effort headed away.

Eliezer Mayenda and Wilson Isidor came on for Sunderland along with Lukas Nmecha for Leeds, and Ampadu had another fierce strike saved by Roefs. The Black Cats suddenly began to threaten at the opposite end when Mayenda had a shot blocked and Omar Alderete nodded over from a corner, but the game fizzled out into a draw.

SUNDERLAND (4-2-3-1): Roefs; Hume, Mukiele, Alderete, Cirkin; Geertruida, Xhaka; Rigg (Mayenda 68), Le Fee, Adingra (Mundle 85); Brobbey (Isidor 68).

LEEDS (3-5-2): Lucas Perri; Rodon (Tanaka 31), Bijol, Struijk; Bogle, Aaronson, Ampadu, Stach, Gudmundsson; Calvert-Lewin (Gnonto 85), Okafor (Nmecha 73).

MY WORLD IS JUST LEEDS

CLAMOUR for a World Cup call-up won't turn the head of Dominic Calvert-Lewin, according to the Leeds star.

England striker Calvert-Lewin netted for the sixth game running when he levelled for Leeds against Sunderland.

Calvert-Lewin has not played for the Three Lions since 2021 but Thomas Tuchel will need a back-up to Harry Kane in North America next summer.

Asked whether his focus is just on Leeds, the forward said: "Of course. Of course. It's always a good feeling to be scoring regularly. I'm in a good moment. My timing is good. As a team we're gelling a bit more. Things are going well for us.

"You're in flow. You can make those runs as a centre-forward and sometimes the ball doesn't find you when you're in a dry spell.

"But you've just got to keep doing it and hope that the tide will turn and that's what has happened for met. I'm feeling good, feeling strong and I'm enjoying playing with the lads."

Leeds are now five unbeaten while Sunderland remain unbeaten at the Stadium of Light.

Leeds boss Daniel Farke said: "We are in really good form and we never know when we are beaten.

"Even when we are in a losing position, we know that we can always come back and we can score."

Sunderland manager Regis Le Bris added: "Very tough game, as expected, because we knew Leeds were a good side in good form."

PREMIER TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal	18	13	3	2	33	11	42
Man City	18	13	1	4	43	17	40
Aston Villa	18	12	3	3	29	19	39
Liverpool	18	10	2	6	30	26	32
Chelsea	18	8	5	5	30	19	29
Man Utd	18	8	5	5	32	28	29
Sunderland	18	7	7	4	20	18	28
Brentford	18	8	2	8	28	26	26
Crystal Palace	18	7	5	6	21	20	26
Fulham	18	8	2	8	25	26	26
Tottenham	18	7	4	7	27	23	25
Everton	18	7	4	7	18	20	25
Brighton	18	6	6	6	26	25	24
Newcastle	18	6	5	7	23	23	23
Bournemouth	18	5	7	6	27	33	22
Leeds	18	5	5	8	25	32	20
Nottm Forest	18	5	3	10	18	28	18
West Ham	18	3	4	11	19	36	13
Burnley	18	3	3	12	19	34	12
Wolves	18	0	2	16	10	39	2

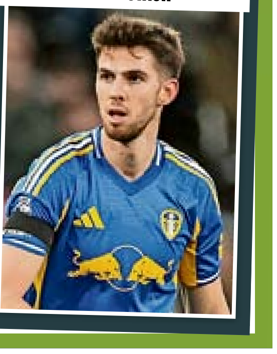
PREMIER LEAGUE

SUNDERLAND		LEEDS
43%	POSSESSION	57%
3	SHOTS ON TARGET	6
3	SHOTS OFF TARGET	5
383	TOTAL PASSES	504
82%	PASSING SUCCESS	85%
3	CORNERS	9
4	OFFSIDE	3
7	FOULS	9
0 1	CARDS	0 0

REF: Tony Harrington **ATT:** 46,675

MAN OF THE MATCH

ANTON STACH



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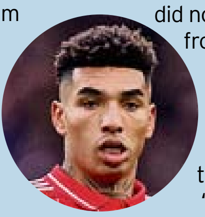
DYCHE CONFIDENT GOALS WILL FLOW FOR IGOR

BY **SARAH CLAPSON**



SEAN DYCHE is certain Igor Jesus will soon back up his impressive performances for Nottingham Forest with plenty of goals.

The Brazilian striker, 24, has adapted quickly to life in English football and put in another standout showing in Saturday's defeat to Manchester City.

He set up Omari Hutchinson for the Reds' equaliser and got under the skin of the visitors' defence.

Jesus (circle) has scored six goals in the Europa League and Carabao Cup but has found the back of the net only once in league action. Dyche is confident patience will pay off as he continues to develop but felt he did not get sufficient protection from the officials against City.

Asked about Jesus rattling City's back line, the Forest boss quipped: "Well, you saw it but apparently the officials didn't!

"I've never seen centre-halves drag someone to the floor so much and get away with it that often. He is doing well, he is learning about the game. He is strong. He plays hard, but he plays fair.

"The next step is to get more goals, but he is in there and he is hungry to get goals.

"He is certainly showing what a good all-rounder he is.

"Now it is just adding goals, which is not as easy as it sounds. But he has scored goals this season and I think he will score more because he does get in the right areas.

"He has had a couple chalked off, don't forget – the one at Liverpool, everyone is still scratching their heads at how that was chalked off."

Dyche will be hoping Jesus can repay such faith with regular centre-forward Chris Wood out for "weeks" after undergoing knee surgery.

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NOTT'M FOREST 1
MANCHESTER CITY 2

BY **SIMON BAJKOWSKI**

PEP GUARDIOLA believes three weeks in sunny Florida was the catalyst for Manchester City's resurgent form this season.

Saturday's win at Nottingham Forest – thanks to goals from Tijjani Reijnders and Rayan Cherki, either side of an Omari Hutchinson equaliser – means the Blues sit second in the Premier League heading into 2026.

That is five places higher than they were at this stage last year as a new-look City side make their mark in three competitions.

City knew they needed to reinvigorate an ageing squad back in January and spent £175million in the winter transfer window.

With Champions League football secured, work was done quickly in the summer to ensure that the bulk of their signings could travel with the squad to the Club World Cup in June.

It was there that Guardiola believes the magic happened as a 'fog' that had been surrounding them in Manchester for months lifted and a new energy was forged among his squad.

That energy has been seen on the faces of everyone at the football club in the last few months as they have played their way into Premier League and Champions League contention, as well as the semi-finals of the Carabao Cup.

There remain concerns over how the Club World Cup will impact the fitness of all the players who competed in it, and City made headlines for the wrong reasons when they were dumped out in the last 16 by Saudi Pro League side Al-Hilal.

However, Guardiola's frustration wasn't in the defeat but that it meant they had to leave their Florida paradise.

"Energy, energy, energy. We lost it last season," said the City boss.

"But we started to train better, to compete better.

"After that we can talk about three at the back, four at the back, wingers or full-backs – that is all bull****.

"We needed energy and then you have a good environment.

"When we went out to Al-Hilal, it wasn't the fact that we didn't win but that we were so good there.

"It was then holidays so I said, 'OK, go on holidays' but I was p***** off because we were good there, good with the guys training, good with the competition.

"The place we were in, Boca Raton in front of the beach. Everyone was happy. We made a lot of dinners, a lot of talks, what we have to do next season. What we have to do.

"We wanted to extend it, just to live that. I think there, after talking with Pep (Lijnders) and James (French), Manel (Estiarte), Hugo (Viana), Txiki (Begiristain), we turned around and said something changed.

"It doesn't mean you are going to win but that you are able to recognise the team. Now it is eight victories in a row.

"It is not easy to compete in the way we do. We have to improve, absolutely, but this mindset is better."

City's changes in summer did not immediately yield results, and the picture looked bleak after defeat in Brighton left them with just three points from their first three games.

The international break that followed gave Guardiola clarity to see what they needed to put right though, and with the growing influence of the new players and staff, City have won 12 of their 15 league matches since to sit just two points off the top of the table.

"Something was in the fog in Manchester, surrounding our training centre," said Guardiola.

"We missed something. It is not switching on or off (energy). Results help. New players, I want to help them. When you've got the same players it is, 'Aah, tired" but new players you think, 'Aah, how is this guy?' and try to analyse.

'We looked at why it was not good against Spurs (a 2-0 home defeat to open their campaign) – the man-marking, and the energy comes from there."

WAKING UP ERLY Haaland has benefited from a new energy in the City team

NOTT'M FOREST (4-2-3-1): John Victor; Williams, Murillo, Milenkovic, Savona; Dominguez (Awoniyi 87), Anderson; Hudson-Odoi (Bakwa 90), Gibbs-White, Hutchinson; Igor Jesus

MANCHESTER CITY (4-3-2-1): Donnarumma; O'Reilly, Gvardiol, Dias, Nunes; Reijnders (Savinho 73), Gonzalez, Silva; Foden, Cherki (Ake 89); Haaland

WE NEEDED SOME TIME IN THE SUNSHINNNE

How Florida got Pep's rock 'n' roll stars back on song

PREMIER LEAGUE

NOTT'M FOREST		MAN CITY
34%	POSSESSION	66%
2	SHOTS ON TARGET	5
2	SHOTS OFF TARGET	4
290	TOTAL PASSES	588
75%	PASSING SUCCESS	90%
5	CORNERS	5
1	OFFSIDES	1
5	FOULS	13
🟥 0 🟨 1	CARDS	🟨 2 🟥 0

REF: Robert Jones **ATT:** 30,778

MAN OF THE MATCH
RAYAN CHERKI

LIVE MY LIFE IN THE CITY...
Guardiola's stars are buzzing again after a battling win at Forest

WAT A RUN... WAT A BOSS

Goal hero Ollie says Villa's 11-match winning run all down to Unai Emery

WAT A FINE WIN
Watkins celebrates at the final whistle and is a huge fan of boss Emery (below)

CHELSEA	**1**
ASTON VILLA	**2**

BY **JOHN TOWNLEY**

OLLIE WATKINS says nobody should be surprised by Aston Villa's remarkable form given the quality of the manager they have in the dugout.

Unai Emery's side have won 17 of their last 19 matches and taken 36 points from the last 39 available in the Premier League, after securing their eighth consecutive league victory against Chelsea on Saturday night.

Watkins came off the bench to turn the game on its head, scoring twice following his introduction just before the hour.

Villa's run of eight straight top-flight wins is their best sequence since 1910, while their 11-match winning streak in all competitions equals a club record previously set in September 1897 and matched in March 1914.

"I didn't have a clue about that," Watkins said about equalling the 111-year record. "But it doesn't surprise me with this manager. Every record he breaks, or we break, I am not surprised because it is down to him. There is confidence from the manager as he believes in us, which is the most important thing. At the start of the season it was very difficult.

"We were losing a lot of games and things were not going our way. Now I think he really believes in us and he is excited for the next game.

"He works so hard and he is so focused. It is resilience [that makes us so strong], really.

"He sees stuff in the game and changes things at half-time. Chelsea were very good in the first half but at the break he was so calm.

"In games where you think he is going to shout at us and get on to us, he is the opposite. In games where we think we have done well he ends up getting on to you and demands more. It is down to him."

The win over Chelsea ensured that Villa will head to Arsenal with the opportunity to draw level on points with the league leaders tomorrow night.

"It is difficult. We have just lost two players from the starting XI [suspensions] in Bouba [Kamara] and Cashy [Matt Cash], who are hard to replace," Watkins said.

"We need to just keep pushing and avoid injuries and bookings like that because we need everyone to be fit and playing regularly. To miss those two is hard but we just have to focus on ourselves."

Defender Ezri Konsa believes boss Emery has helped create a "special" feeling and says the players are keen to keep the sequence going.

"It's always special creating history and I've been here for a long time, to create some history is an amazing feeling," he told VillaTV.

"And long may it continue."

Following the win over Chelsea, Villa have clinched the most points from losing positions in the Premier League so far this season (18).

It is also the ninth consecutive victory which has been secured by a single goal after Watkins' 85th-minute winner.

Konsa added: "This season, when we have gone a goal or two down, we haven't dropped our heads, we've always believed.

"Ollie scoring the two goals was amazing. I'm really happy for him."

CHELSEA (4-2-3-1): Sanchez; James, Badiashile, Chalobah, Cucurella (Gusto 69); Caicedo, Fernandez; Pedro Neto, Palmer (Estevao 72), Garnacho (Gittens 69); Joao Pedro (Delap 69)

ASTON VILLA (4-4-2): Martinez; Cash, Konsa, Lindelof, Maatsen (Digne 83); McGinn (Onana 59), Kamara (Bogarde 83), Tielemans, Buendia (Watkins 58); Malen (Sancho 59), Rogers

PREMIER LEAGUE

CHELSEA		ASTON VILLA
63%	POSSESSION	37%
3	SHOTS ON TARGET	8
4	SHOTS OFF TARGET	1
523	TOTAL PASSES	320
89%	PASSING SUCCESS	80%
6	CORNERS	7
0	OFFSIDES	0
16	FOULS	8
0 5	CARDS	3 0

REF: Stuart Attwell **ATT:** 39,765

MAN OF THE MATCH
OLLIE WATKINS

WE ARE SORRY
James (left) alongside team-mates applaud the Blues fans after the game

JAMES: WE LET IT SLIP AWAY

BY **SAM TRUELOVE**

REECE JAMES and Moises Caicedo believe Chelsea only have themselves to blame for their defeat to Aston Villa.

The Blues dominated in the first half at Stamford Bridge and should have had more to show for it than a single goal scored by Joao Pedro (below), who flicked in James' corner.

Ollie Watkins came off the bench after the break to stun the hosts with two goals as Villa were completely revived by Unai Emery's substitutions, while Chelsea were wrong-footed.

"We dominated 60, 65 minutes of the game," said James. "We came out sharp with the way we set up, we got off on the front foot and in the right way.

"In the first 60 minutes they didn't create any chances, and then they get one and the dynamic changes. We knew they'd make substitutions and the shape changed slightly but it was nothing we shouldn't have been able to deal with.

"We understand the style and the way they want to play. We have ourselves to blame. Second half one or two moments changed the game. They picked up momentum. It was two slight errors from us and we got punished.

"This is why it's the toughest league in the world. It's always disappointing to lose at home."

Caicedo, who picked up his fourth yellow card of the season in the league against Villa, agreed with James.

"It's painful because we were controlling the game," the midfielder said. "The first half was so good and we started the second half well and could have won, even after the first goal they scored.

"For sure we were frustrated because we were doing a great job, but when you do not concentrate for the whole game in the Premier League it's going to happen."

Chelsea have just one win to show from their last six Premier League matches as they have slumped from second to outside the top four.

Enzo Maresca's side host Bournemouth tomorrow night and James has called on the Blues squad to bounce back with a win.

"Many teams have spells in the season when they're underperforming," the England international said. "We have to keep chipping away game by game. We are fighting every day, we want to get better.

"We have to put this game behind us and look forward because we have another game in a few days which we have to prepare right for, come back and win."

Caicedo added: "We need to keep learning from this because we were there, up, but in the Premier League you need to be consistent to stay up. So we need to keep learning.

"This is not just a loss, it's a chance to learn, and for sure we're going to come back even stronger.

"It's important for us, for the fans, to end the year in a good way. So we're just going to learn from this and focus on the next game because we want to give everything."

TIM IN BOOM AFTER TOON

BURNLEY 0
EVERTON 0

BY **CHRIS BEESLEY**

TIM IROEGBUNAM insists he can continue to keep improving after bouncing back from his Newcastle nightmare and filling Idrissa Gueye's boots in the heart of the Everton team.

The midfielder had a difficult outing against the Toon last month when he was hooked at the interval by manager David Moyes in a 4-1 home defeat.

Newcastle's second goal stemmed from his poor touch when trying to clear his lines and he was shrugged off the ball far too easily by Anthony Elanga to set up the third.

However, since then Iroegbunam (above, shooting) has produced a clutch of promising displays and shone in Saturday's goalless draw.

The 22-year-old said: "The Newcastle game was definitely a bad day for me. But obviously, you can have good games, you can have bad games.

"It's just about forgetting about it and bouncing on and showing what you can do in the next game. I happened to do that.

"I'm working hard in training. In the games I'm showing glimpses of what I can do.

"There's definitely more to come. It's just showing all I can do and really taking the opportunity.

"I'm feeling good. I feel like I start to tire towards the end, so it's about getting those fitness levels up so I can play really strong throughout the whole 90 minutes. There's clarity in what the manager wants his midfielders to do. But it's about showing my strengths and bringing them into the team when I'm playing."

Everton have now failed to score in their last three matches, but Iroegbunam insists they can cope without creative trio Iliman Ndiaye, Kiernan Dewsbury-Hall and Jack Grealish, who were all missing from the side at Turf Moor.

He said: "I wouldn't say it's much of a problem. We didn't have that confidence to go and get the ball, to play passes forward, to get into the final third.

"We didn't really get the ball into the box enough. We just didn't really do much to cause any problems for them.

"We're strong as a team, there's a lot of togetherness. So as long as we work hard for each other, it won't be a problem."

Burnley boss Scott Parker believes his struggling side should take significant belief from recent performances even as their long wait for a win continues.

Parker said: "When I look at this group and I look at the games, we've been hugely hugely competitive and it could be so different.

"We lost seven games on the spin. This could be totally and utterly different."

BURNLEY (4-2-3-1): Dubravka; Laurent, Humphreys, Ekdal, Walker; Ugochukwu, Cullen; Lucas Pires, Edwards (Tresor 88), Broja (Flemming 88); Bruun Larsen (Anthony 73)

EVERTON(4-2-3-1): Pickford; O'Brien, Tarkowski, Keane, Mykolenko; Iroegbunam, Garner; Dibling (Paterson 88), Alcaraz (Rohl 69), McNeil; Beto (Barry 70)

PREMIER LEAGUE

BURNLEY		EVERTON
54%	POSSESSION	46%
0	SHOTS ON TARGET	6
9	SHOTS OFF TARGET	6
466	TOTAL PASSES	394
77%	PASSING SUCCESS	78%
6	CORNERS	5
2	OFFSIDES	3
8	FOULS	8
🟥 0 🟨 0	CARDS	🟨 2 🟥 0

REF: Craig Pawson **ATT:** 21,637

MAN OF THE MATCH
JAMES GARNER

FRIMPONG'S

Flying Dutchman shows his value as Reds profit

LIVERPOOL	2
WOLVES	1

BY **ANDY DUNN**

AFTER the 90-or-so minutes are up, Arne Slot must go down as one of the calmest, most sensible managers the Premier League has seen.

Always measured, always polite, always fair, pretty much unflappable.

But if you did want to wind up the Dutchman, there is one easy ruse… mention how much money Liverpool spent last summer.

Or, to be more specific, mention how much money Liverpool spent in transfer fees without mentioning how much money they received in transfer fees.

As it happened, no one had to mention it after the narrow win against Wolves, Slot brought it up himself.

He brought it up in the context of the unfortunate injuries to Alexander Isak and Giovanni Leoni, and to the physical problems that have interrupted Jeremie Frimpong's start to life at Liverpool.

"Jeremie is a great example – now if he is fit, he can definitely help us," said Slot

"A lot has been said by so many people about the amount of money we've spent last summer.

"But unfortunately not all of the money we've spent we have used and that has to do with the injuries of these players."

Slot has a point, but only a minor one. Regardless of their sales, the bottom line is that Liverpool spent well over £400million on new players and their impact has been limited.

Which is why – even though the victory was over whipping boys as hapless as any team the Premier League has seen – Liverpool's performance against Wolves held some significance.

The headline performer was Florian Wirtz, very belatedly scoring his first goal for the club. But the support act was probably more impressive. At Spurs a week previously, most people credited Frimpong for setting up Hugo Ekitike's goal but, officially, his deflected cross did not register as an assist.

There was though no doubting his assist for Ryan Gravenberch against two-point Wolves.

And it was a game-changer. Over 40 minutes of tedious deadlock had preceded the moment when Frimpong's burst of inspiration set up what was eventually a hard-earned Liverpool triumph.

An explosion of pace followed by the most intelligent of cut-backs.

"Pace, that is what he has," said Slot. "That is so crucial in modern football. The goal he assisted was pure individual ability."

Spot on. Frimpong himself was clearly delighted, talking to social media to say: "Four wins in a row to wrap up the year, Can't wait for 2026 with you reds."

And in 2026, Frimpong could be as important as any of Liverpool's big-money signings.

Despite Wolves' show of spirit, which saw Santiago Bueno pull a goal back, a third consecutive Premier League win took Liverpool into fourth place and Slot spoke about how important Trent Alexander-Arnold had been in the title-winning season.

Frimpong is no like-for-like replacement but he has a versatility on the right flank that should be invaluable if he stays fit for the second half of the season.

After starting as right-back, Frimpong moved forward after the introduction of Conor Bradley.

Assuming Mo Salah does play for Liverpool again after the Africa Cup of Nations, there is no reason why – especially against teams as limited as Wolves – Frimpong cannot form a very productive relationship with the Egyptian.

And one thing is for sure. If Slot ever stops being prickly about the amount of money Liverpool splashed out last summer, he might soon reflect on the £30m spent on Frimpong as money very well spent.

LIVERPOOL (4-2-3-1): Alisson; Frimpong, Konate, Van Dijk, Kerkez; Gravenberch, Jones; Chiesa (Bradley 61), Mac Allister, Wirtz (Nyoni 90); Ekitike (Gakpo 86).

WOLVES (3-4-2-1): Sa; Mosquera (Arias 79), S Bueno, Krejci; Doherty (Tchatchoua 62), Andre, Gomes, H Bueno (Wolfe 62); Hwang (Strand Larsen 62), Mane; Arokodare.

FIT TO BURST
Frimpong, just back from injury, sets up Reds' opener and (left) with Slot

CASHING IN

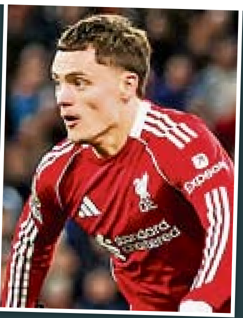
PREMIER LEAGUE

LIVERPOOL		WOLVES
67%	POSSESSION	33%
4	SHOTS ON TARGET	4
7	SHOTS OFF TARGET	4
660	TOTAL PASSES	327
88%	PASSING SUCCESS	77%
6	CORNERS	4
1	OFFSIDES	0
5	FOULS	13
0 🟥 0 🟨	CARDS	1 🟨 0 🟥

REF: Simon Hooper **ATT:** 60,466

MAN OF THE MATCH

FLORIAN WIRTZ



IN TIME THE GOALS WILL FLO

BY **ANDY DUNN**

VIRGIL VAN DIJK has admitted Florian Wirtz is still coming to terms with the pace and physicality of the Premier League.

The £116million summer signing from Bayer Leverkusen (right) finally got off the mark for Liverpool on Saturday, netting their second goal in the 2-1 win against Wolves.

Van Dijk was one of the first to celebrate with the Germany attacker, 22, and was clearly delighted for a team-mate who has struggled to live up to his reputation and price tag.

But the Liverpool skipper said: "He's getting used to playing for Liverpool and what we want to do as a team.

"He's getting used to the intensity. After about 70 minutes I think he had some cramp. It's part of the game. He just has to keep going. He is a very intelligent player who is so comfortable on the ball. He finds space between the lines and can be very important.

"He wants to be important in terms of goals and assists. The work rate he puts in and the chances he creates is what I think is even more important.

"I am really pleased for him. You saw the celebrations. Everyone is so happy for him.

"It was an important goal for us. I was very happy for him. He played a very good game. It's great to see and hopefully many more to come from him." The win means Liverpool are in fourth position in the Premier League and look primed for a new year surge.

But Van Dijk is keeping a lid on expectations, saying: "We just need to try to find consistency and wins. Let's see what the season brings. There are plenty of games to play. The FA Cup to come and the Champions League we also want to do well in. The only focus we should have is being in the best shape we can for the next game.

"It's an exciting challenge with so many games coming up. Difficult games starting with Leeds, Fulham and then Arsenal. Let's embrace it."

SHOWING FIGHT Arokodare holds the ball up as Wolves stayed in the game at Anfield

DARE TO DREAM AFTER A SCRAP

TOLU AROKODARE wants Wolves to build on their second-half performance at Anfield when they go to Old Trafford tomorrow night.

Rob Edwards' side remain well adrift at the bottom of the Premier League with just two points, but showed fight after going 2-0 down late in the first half against Liverpool.

Santiago Bueno's goal made it 2-1 after the break and they were in the game right up until the final whistle.

It is Manchester United away next but striker Arokodare is not daunted.

He said: "It's not easy for us to play at Anfield and then Old Trafford – Liverpool and Manchester United are two top teams – but it doesn't matter, we're going to go into it like we finished this game and try to take the same spirit into the next game.

"It was a defeat but the second half was much better than the first. We scored, we had chances, we had more of the ball and there are positives.

"I'm devastated, obviously, but also there's a little bit of pride. We came here and it's not easy to play at Anfield against Liverpool, but we can be very proud of our second half."

Bueno's goal was only Wolves' 10th in their 18 league games so far this season and Arokodare knows the attackers have underperformed.

The summer signing from Genk, who has netted just once in the league, said: "We're going to have to work on our goal scoring, obviously. We need to score more goals and that's my department. We need to work on creating chances and scoring goals and hopefully stop conceding too."

THE BEES' KNEES

Andrews' men can look down on Frank at their reunion

CHERRY PICKER
Schade (centre) mobbed after completing hat-trick against Bournemouth

BRENTFORD 4 BOURNEMOUTH 1

BY **STEVE JUDGE**

IT WILL be a big point of pride for Brentford fans that they will be above Tottenham when Thomas Frank returns to the Gtech Stadium on Thursday.

But for players such as Mathias Jensen, who owes his career in England to his fellow Dane, it is not such a big deal.

He said: "We don't really care about the table. We are only halfway through the season.

"Yeah [it is a good sign] but we also know how tight it is, so in two games we can be down the bottom again, this is how it is."

That is not how it feels for those watching in the stands, and certainly not the revisionists online questioning Frank's credentials due to the performances Brentford have put in under Keith Andrews (right).

The Bees were tipped to go down after Frank and leading players Bryan Mbeumo, Yoane Wissa and Christian Norgaard left in the summer.

Instead, the thrashing of Bournemouth lifted them to their best Premier League points tally after 18 games.

Tottenham were one point worse off on Christmas Day than under Ange Postecoglou last season.

Jensen (far right) recalled Frank winning just one of his first 10 games in charge of the Bees, so he will not be taking his old boss and Spurs lightly.

He said: "I have not watched too many Tottenham games.

"It's one game at a time. We lost there recently, so we will analyse them in the next few days before we play them.

"I know he also had a tough start at Brentford over his first 10 games or so.

"It takes time to change the culture and get everyone together." It took Frank (below) his first summer transfer window to 'get everyone together' at the Bees' old Griffin Park home, then two full seasons to win promotion to the Premier League.

Jensen joined from La Liga side Celta Vigo in July 2019.

He said: "I never saw myself playing in the Championship when I was younger but Thomas was the reason why I came here and of course we had a lot of amazing years together."

Jensen laughed off the notion that everyone in football loves Frank, saying: "I met a few players who were not starting under him, obviously you cannot keep everybody happy."

One player who was not always happy under Frank was Kevin Schade. In May, the winger spoke about how the lack of game time in his first 18 months impacted him.

He said: "It's hard to get that rhythm if you play one game, then you don't play, then 20 minutes, then 10. That was a tough time."

The German will head into Thursday's reunion on a high after scoring a perfect hat-trick against Bournemouth.

He shrugged off Bafode Diakite to deliver a left-foot finish on seven minutes, started and finished the move that made it 3-0 after the break with his right foot and headed in his third with the final touch of the match.

Antoine Semenyo scored his third goal in three games to make it 3-1.

But the Cherries could not handle the pace and strength of Schade and Igor Thiago, whose shot crossed the line when Diakite's goal-line clearance hit keeper Djordje Petrovic and went in.

BRENTFORD (4-2-3-1): Kelleher; Kayode, Collins, Ajer, Henry (Hickey 77); Yarmoliuk (Nelson 89), Janelt; Lewis-Potter (Henderson 89), Jensen (Damsgaard 77), Schade; Thiago.

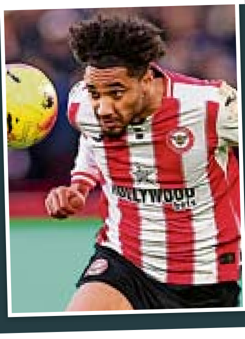
BOURNEMOUTH (4-2-3-1): Petrovic; Smith (Brooks 46), Senesi, Diakite (Kluivert 46), Truffert (Soler 78); Cook, Scott (Adli 85); Jimenez, Tavernier, Semenyo; Kroupi (Evanilson 46).

PREMIER LEAGUE

BRENTFORD		BOURN'MTH
49%	POSSESSION	51%
7	SHOTS ON TARGET	10
4	SHOTS OFF TARGET	2
395	TOTAL PASSES	376
79%	PASSING SUCCESS	77%
2	CORNERS	15
3	OFFSIDES	1
9	FOULS	8
0 2	CARDS	2 0

REF: Peter Bankes **ATT:** 17,152

MAN OF THE MATCH
KEVIN SCHADE



TAV FAITH IN IRAOLA GAME PLAN

BY **STEVE JUDGE**

MARCUS TAVERNIER had no doubt that "the first half was probably the worst half we've had all season".

He rightly apologised to the Bournemouth fans, with some of those who made the trip to Brentford unhappy that the players did not fully acknowledge them after the game.

Nobody associated with the visitors was happy, despite an improved second-half display which saw Antoine Semenyo score for a third game in a row.

Head coach Andoni Iraola's biggest gripe with this lacklustre display that stretched the Cherries run without a win to nine games was that they were too passive.

Tavernier (above) stressed the importance of sticking together and keeping faith in the way Iraola wants them to play.

He said: "We're in a difficult position right now and we need to reflect on this one and put things right.

"We know it's nothing to do with the system, because we've had success with it.

"It's a tough time, but every single player cares about where this club is going. We need to stick together.

"We can only apologise to the fans for what we've shown [at Brentford]. This isn't how we want to represent them or ourselves, and we must do better on Tuesday. We need to put it right and compete much better in games."

Iraola had set his side a target of 25 points for the midpoint of the season.

Defeat at Brentford means they need to win at Chelsea tomorrow to reach that goal.

It is a task that has been made all the more difficult with Alex Scott a doubt after coming off complaining of pain in the jaw which Tyrone Mings broke last season.

SCAR TISSUE Scarles (left) is consoled by Walker-Peters after his error cost Hammers

KYLE LIFTS OLLIE DAZE

Walker-Peters tells Scarles to keep his head up after horror

PREMIER LEAGUE		
WEST HAM		FULHAM
44%	POSSESSION	56%
2	SHOTS ON TARGET	4
4	SHOTS OFF TARGET	6
391	TOTAL PASSES	497
82%	PASSING SUCCESS	86%
5	CORNERS	4
7	OFFSIDES	2
8	FOULS	8
0 🟥 1 🟨	CARDS	3 🟨 0 🟥

REF: Chris Kavanagh

MAN OF THE MATCH
BERND LENO

WEST HAM	0
FULHAM	1

BY **PAUL BROWN**

KYLE WALKER-PETERS knew exactly how Ollie Scarles felt and made a beeline for him after his mistake sunk West Ham.

A horrible mis-kick from Scarles allowed Harry Wilson to pick out Raul Jimenez for Fulham's 85th-minute winner.

The left-back, 20, was tearful as he left the pitch with the Hammers still stuck in the bottom three.

But Walker-Peters went through a similar ordeal on his Champions League debut as a 21-year-old.

He was playing for Tottenham when his slip allowed Ousmane Dembele to score for Barcelona.

But he learnt from his mistake and Spurs ended up coming back to equalise and squeeze into the last 16.

Walker-Peters said: "I spoke to Ollie at the end on the pitch and told him just to keep his head up.

"I've made plenty of mistakes. I know how it feels, but you come back stronger from them.

"We've got another game Tuesday and we need to win."

That game, at home to Brighton, looks massive for West Ham, who have lost three on the bounce now under Nuno Espirito Santo.

They are winless in seven Premier League games and missed a chance to narrow the gap to 17th-placed Nottingham Forest this weekend.

Skipper Jarrod Bowen (below) said: "When things aren't going well, it can be easy to point fingers.

"But ultimately we're the ones who have to change things. I start with myself first, and I have to demand more from myself, but we all have to demand more from each other."

Bowen had two good chances to win the game but was foiled by Bernd Leno before later missing the target.

The England forward revealed that Hammers players got things off their chest in the dressing room.

He said: "A few players spoke after the game, which is good. It's always hard when there's emotion after you've lost.

"But it's a really good group here, and we all know that we have to demand more of ourselves. Everyone agrees with that, and we have to stick together."

That was a message Walker-Peters also sent to Hammers fans who protested against the club's owners and booed them off at the end.

They held up red cards with the words "no More BS" on them in the 15th minute to mark 15 years of what they see as broken promises from David Sullivan and Karen Brady.

Walker-Peters said: "Stick with us. I think today showed that we're definitely still there, still fighting."

There was a stench of failure permeating the London Stadium and West Ham could struggle to come up smelling of roses.

Their XI had the uneasy feel of a Championship team if you took out the obvious quality of Bowen and Lucas Paqueta. Heads then went down when Fulham's late goal went in and there was no late rally to suggest an equaliser could be possible.

Scarles was also left alone with his head in his hands for an uncomfortably long time before Tomas Soucek came over to console him.

Defender Max Kilman said: "Football at the highest level is like a roller-coaster. It goes up and down and it's just part of the game."

WEST HAM (4-3-2-1): Areola 6; Walker-Peters 6, Todibo 5, Kilman 6, Scarles 5; Magassa 5 (Soucek 83), Potts 6, Fernandes 6; Summerville 5 (Wilson 56, 6), Paqueta 5 (Earthy 83); Bowen 7.

FULHAM (4-2-3-1): Leno 8; Tete 7 (Castagne 82), Andersen 7, Cuenca 6, Robinson 7; Lukic 6 (Diop 87), Berge 6; Wilson 7, Smith Rowe 4 (Cairney 82), Kevin 5 (King 69, 6); Jimenez 6.

FUL THROTTLE CAN TAKE US A LONG WAY SAYS RAUL

BY **PAUL BROWN**

THREE wins in their final three Premier League games of the year have Fulham dreaming of Europe in 2026.

Raul Jimenez (left) scored a late winner at West Ham to complete the hat-trick of victories which have propelled the Cottagers into the top half. Now, they are eyeing up a run to the European places after turning things around from back-to-back defeats.

Jimenez said: "We want to go as high as possible. It's tough, the league is really competitive. We know that we can be there.

"We need to continue working. It's a tough period, a lot of games, and we need to win as many of them as possible and be prepared for everything.

"It's important always to keep this good form. We wanted to be like this the whole season, and now that we are in good form we don't want to lose it, we want to continue.

"It's really special for us to be winning three games in a row, so we are really happy to finish the year with a win, and we want to start the next year with the same.

"We are playing well, having control of the games.

"We know we are going to have our chances to score – it was late, but at the end it's 1-0 and we go back home with the three points, and happy."

EUSTACE AIMS TO HEAP MORE PAIN ON MARTI

LEICESTER v DERBY

Championship: Kick-off 7.45pm

JOHN EUSTACE has cranked up the pressure on under-fire Leicester boss Marti Cifuentes after insisting the Foxes "expect promotion".

City were jeered off again after the 2-1 home defeat to Watford left them well out of the play-off picture, with just five wins in the last 19 games.

Leicester's 3-1 win over Derby at Pride Park this month was a rare high point for the Spaniard (inset), and as he plots a revenge mission Rams boss Eustace said: "They are a difficult opponent, they have top players and they expect promotion.

"This group will work their socks off to try to get a result."

Dion Sanderson is available after sitting out the Boxing Day draw against his parent club Birmingham. Winger Joe Ward is suspended after his red card at St Andrew's.

Sanderson could come in for centre-back Danny Batth, who said: "Whoever is playing, I will support them. We're all in it together."

Cifuentes needs results to lift the pressure and he said: "The players have more quality than they are showing.

"There are things we've needed to change and it's not a quick process, but there is no hiding place."

INCE KEEN TO HALT REVIVAL

NORWICH v WATFORD

Championship: Kick-off 7.45pm

TOM INCE insists Watford are determined to put Norwich's great escape bid on hold.

The in-form Hornets are bidding for a hat-trick of wins for the first time in 16 months to boost their play-off hopes as they travel to Carrow Road.

Norwich have won their last three at home under new boss Philippe Clement to move to within a point of safety, after looking dead and buried under former head coach Liam Manning.

But Javi Gracia's Watford have lost just once in the last 11 games to leave them a point off the top six.

Veteran winger Ince (inset) said: "It's a quick turnaround and we know it will be a tough test.

"The attitude and desire of the lads is shining through.

"We know Carrow Road is always a tough place to go and I think their league position is false. We have to go there and nullify their threats."

Norwich defender Harry Darling insists the mood in the camp is buoyant under Clement, saying: "It's a different feeling now, which is nice.

"We're building momentum at home with the fans getting behind us."

JAK'S FLIP TEES ACT

Boss orders Tigers to deliver fans a hot show at Boro after dismal Hillsborough display

ROAR CRY Jakirovic wants a big performance but will miss Gelhardt (right)

MIDDLESBROUGH v HULL

Championship: Kick-off 7.45pm

BY **JASON MELLOR**

SERGEJ JAKIROVIC is plotting a Teesside revenge mission to make up for Hull's Hillsborough horror show.

The Tigers boss was left seething by his side's toothless display in the 2-2 Boxing Day draw at rock-bottom Sheffield Wednesday – accusing his men of still being on their Christmas holidays as they squandered two precious points in their push for the Premier League.

After letting down almost 4,000 Hull fans against the Owls, Jakirovic expects a big improvement in front of another sold-out following of more than 2,000 against high-flying Middlesbrough at the Riverside.

A fourth win in five will cut the gap to two points to second-place Boro, who hit four first-half goals in a 4-1 stroll at the MKM Stadium at the start of December.

Jakirovic said: "I have to say a big thanks to the fans for their support because at Hillsborough we were not good on the pitch and they were very good in the stands.

"We know that we have to play better for them and ourselves against Middlesbrough. Then they can hopefully join in with our celebrations." Defender Cody Drameh is set to return to the squad after a back problem, but midfielder John Lundstram remains an injury doubt.

Joint top scorer Joe Gelhardt is sidelined with a calf problem and Algerian winger Mohamed Belloumi is set for his latest spell out after limping off against the Owls with hamstring trouble.

Jakirovic added: "He'll have a scan to see how much damage there is, but I'm not optimistic because it's the same leg and he's had this type of injury before."

Injury-hit Boro are guaranteed to go into 2026 in second spot as they look to cut the eight-point gap to leaders Coventry.

Callum Brittain is one of just four fit defenders and he said: "I've played in the Championship for long enough to know that anything can happen.

"It's a crazy league and we just need to be consistent and keep performing the way we have done.

"We've got a big set of games coming up and if we can put a little bit of a run together, then it's a great period to do that."

Boro defenders Alfie Jones, George Edmundson and Matt Targett all suffered knocks in the Boxing Day draw at home to Blackburn to leave the Teessiders short at the back.

Brittain added: "It's a tough league and it's heavy on the legs and on the body.

"It's gutting to see a couple more of the lads go down, but I'm sure they'll try to get back as quickly as possible."

CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND-UP

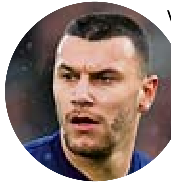
MILLY BACK TO BOOST NORTH END AFTER BAN

PRESTON striker Milutin Osmajic is available for the trip to WREXHAM after serving a nine-match ban for racially abusing Burnley's Hannibal Mejbri last season.

North End have won just twice during the two-month absence of the four-goal Montenegro international (right) on a charge he strongly refuted.

Assistant boss Stuart McCall said: "It's good that Milly is available as it's probably one area we've been slightly light in."

Phil Parkinson's Wrexham have certainly not been light in attack.



They put five past Sheffield United on Friday and two-goal striker Kieffer Moore said: "You get criticism, you get praise and you need to keep on an even keel. You can't take it too harshly and you can't take the praise too much, either."

Valerien Ismael admits injury-hit BLACKBURN are being kept afloat by their thriving academy.

Rovers have blooded a host of young players to cover for the absence of sidelined senior stars.

Ahead of the trip to SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY, the Ewood Park boss said: "It's a terrible situation, but we're not the only ones.

"The academy is the only way we can survive.

"The relentless schedule is not suitable for modern football and we must think about protecting the players.

"I'm pleased, at the minute, the academy players are able to fill the gap." BRISTOL CITY hope to boost their top-six

GET BACK ON TRACT

Woolfenden out for revenge against his old club Ipswich

LUKE-ING GOOD
Woolfenden had to bide his time for a start but has impressed recently

COVENTRY v IPSWICH

Championship: Kick-off 6pm

BY **JASON MELLOR**

LUKE WOOLFENDEN has a simple promotion mantra: "Keep calm and carry on."

The Coventry defender locks horns with his former club as the runaway Championship leaders look to avenge a 3-0 Portman Road reverse at the start of December.

Woolfenden admits only a second defeat of the season at the hands of his old mates still stings.

But Frank Lampard's men quickly bounced back and can stretch their lead over the third-placed Tractor Boys to 16 points with another win.

The centre-back was a mainstay of the Ipswich side promoted to the Premier League under Kieran McKenna in 2024.

He said: "It probably wasn't a 3-0 game earlier this month and they will admit that.

"We were the better team in the first half, but they're a very good side and they took their chances. It will be a tough game, but we will go into it with confidence.

"To be fair, the majority of the squad I was there with has moved on, but I have still got a lot of friends there.

"As soon as the whistle goes, though, a game is a game, so it doesn't really matter and my focus is on helping us to get the three points.

"There's a great spirit in the squad. We don't get too high when we win and we don't get too low when we lose. The next game is the most important one.

"We keep ticking them off and then, before you know it, the season is done and you see where you're at. The message is, 'Keep calm and carry on'."

Woolfenden struggled to force his way into Lampard's plans after his arrival in September.

But he has impressed after starting the last two games as a flu bug swept through the camp.

He added: "The timing of my arrival didn't help.

"Coming in on deadline day when the boys were already flying, there's no reason to change the team and I knew that.

"It's been about being patient and biding my time.

"It's been difficult coming off the bench getting minutes here and there and not knowing when you're going to start, but I've enjoyed being here.

"Hopefully now I'm in the team, we'll see what happens."

Woolfenden hopes to put the shackles on Ivan Azon and Chuba Akpom – the two strikers who are vying to fill the void left by a groin injury to George Hirst (above) which has ruled Town's six-goal man out until at least February.

Ipswich defender Leif Davis said: "It's a setback for Hirsty, but he'll come back stronger.

"We've got two good players who can play that role well and work hard for the team."

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ambitions by sealing back-to-back away wins at promotion rivals MILLWALL.

And BIRMINGHAM aim to snap a five-match winless streak when they host SOUTHAMPTON.

STOKE are out to settle a few scores against SHEFFIELD UNITED as they aim to rekindle their promotion push after six defeats in nine.

Mark Robins' side were on the wrong end of a four-goal thumping at Bramall Lane at the start of the month.

And the Potters boss said: "It's a really good test because that result stung and it wasn't that long ago, so we want to put in a really good performance."

QPR can turn up the heat on under-pressure WEST BROM boss Ryan Mason by consigning the Baggies to back-to-back home defeats.

Jimmy Dunne's header (right) earned Rangers a Boxing Day point at Portsmouth and the Loftus Road skipper said: "We've been on a decent run.

"It's really tough physically and mentally, but we're not afraid of the Championship.

"This squad doesn't have the scars of the past and if we can continue grinding out points away and beating teams at home, then we're getting somewhere."

MOUS TURNS INTO OSTRICH TO STAY ALIVE

PORTSMOUTH v CHARLTON

Championship: Kick-off 7.45pm

JOHN MOUSINHO is adopting a head-in-the-sand approach to Portsmouth's fight for survival.

Pompey have taken five points from the last three games but are still in the relegation zone on goal difference as they hit the campaign's halfway point.

Not that the Fratton Park boss (inset) would know and ahead of out-of-form Charlton's visit, he said: "The table is irrelevant now. The only thing we're thinking about is the next game.

"I'm pretty pleased with the direction we're going and we need to make sure we keep building on that."

Mark Kosznovszky has recovered from a dead leg and defender Conor Shaughnessy is back in contention after three months out with a hamstring problem.

Josh Knight, Florian Bianchini and Connor Ogilvie are all out and winger Josh Murphy faces at least a fortnight on the sidelines with a hamstring issue.

Charlton are five points above them and look nervous after just one win in eight following the 1-0 Boxing Day defeat at Norwich.

Addicks midfielder Karoy Anderson said: "The games come thick and fast. I'd urge fans to stick with us because games come every few days."

SWANS MUST TAKE FLIGHT

OXFORD v SWANSEA

Championship: Kick-off 7.45pm

MARKO STAMENIC admits it's time Swansea started turning plaudits into points.

The Swans are showing signs of life under new boss Vitor Matos, but the 1-0 Boxing Day setback to leaders Coventry leaves them hovering just above the drop zone ahead of the relegation six-pointer at Oxford.

Swans pushed Frank Lampard's men all the way in another encouraging display, but New Zealand midfielder Stamenic (inset) knows it's points not performances that will help them climb clear of danger.

He said: "There are a lot of positives. We're becoming consistent and now we just need to turn those displays into wins.

"We all believe they'll translate into results. We've got to turn it around."

Caretaker boss Craig Short, 57, joined John Terry in ruling himself out of the vacant Oxford manager's job.

He guided the U's to a 2-1 win over Southampton in the first game in his FOURTH temporary stint in charge at the Kassam Stadium, and said: "I'm focusing on being a safe pair of hands.

"I'm capable of steadying the ship and seeing where the process goes."

LEAGUE TWO ROUND-UP

LINDSEY'S PLANNING TO TOP-PLE ANDY'S ACES

CRAWLEY boss Scott Lindsey hopes to throw a spanner in BROMLEY'S promotion push.

Andy Woodman's men are looking for a fifth straight win which could send them top.

But Lindsey (right) said: "They are flying at the moment and they can't seem to lose a game.

"Hopefully we can change that and get a good result. I don't care how well Bromley are doing, this is a hard place to come."

Leaders WALSALL can extend their advantage at the top with a ninth win in 12 at home to OLDHAM.

New boss Steve Evans hopes to guide injury-hit BRISTOL ROVERS to a first win since September as they host BARNET on the back of the 3-2 Boxing Day defeat to Woodman's second-place side. Evans said: "There's no point worrying about the players we've not got.

"We have to worry and not sleep about the players that we've got because I can't affect the ones we haven't.

"Boxing Day was a real kick in the stomach, so there's one way you react, which is to prove it's a one-off." MK DONS defender Jack Sanders spoke of his frustration after serving a three-game ban for pulling the hair of Oldham's Dynel Simeu.

Paul Warne's side are looking for a third consecutive win at home to promotion rivals NOTTS COUNTY.

Sanders said: "They said it was a hair pull. If I touched his hair, it was completely accidental, I wouldn't do that to anyone."

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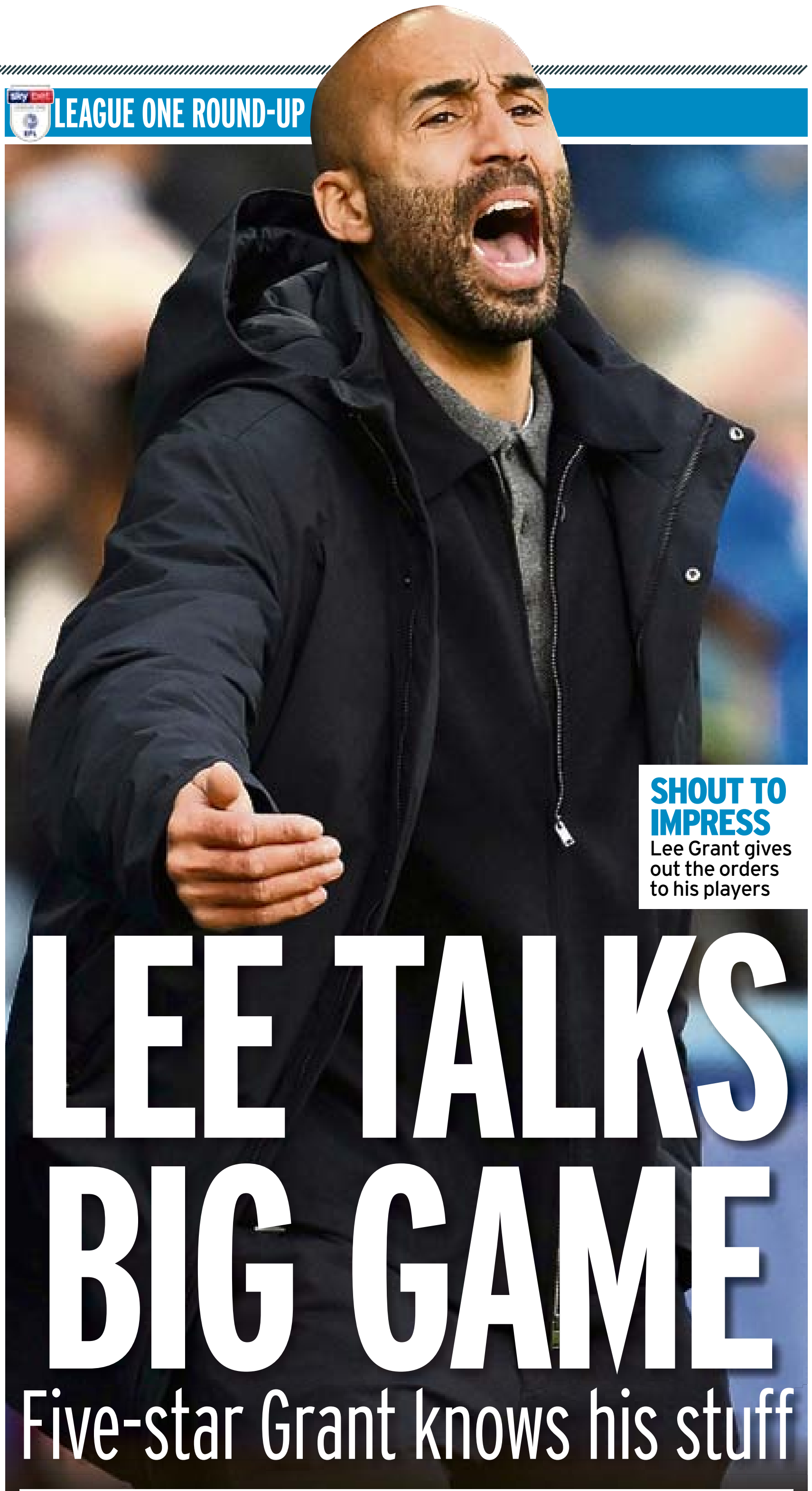
LEAGUE ONE ROUND-UP



SHOUT TO IMPRESS Lee Grant gives out the orders to his players

LEE TALKS BIG GAME

Five-star Grant knows his stuff

BY **JASON MELLOR**

HUDDERSFIELD boss Lee Grant left fans scratching their heads after going into management-speak overdrive.

The Terriers are looking for a third straight win at home after the five-goal demolition of Port Vale.

And ahead of their clash against NORTHAMPTON, Grant said: "It was a really pleasing result because Vale were top of the stats for high-intensity runs and top of the league for zone-five running."

A home win tonight could move Grant's side into the top six with just one point between them and Stockport in the final play-off spot.

Cobblers chief Kevin Nolan is pleased to be back in action so fast after the painful 5-1 hammering at Burton on Boxing Day.

The former Bolton captain said: "I think it's a good thing we have another game so quickly.

"Burton was disappointing, but we will learn from it. We have to dust ourselves down and move on quickly."

Beleaguered PORT VALE boss Darren Moore (inset) insists he will carry on, despite mounting calls from fans for the 51-year-old to be sacked.

The Valiants are without a league win since September to leave them rock bottom and 10 points adrift of safety as they look to avoid more West Yorkshire woe at BRADFORD.

Moore, who is less than two years into a five-and-a-half-year contract, said: "We have still got 25 games to go, so we're not at the halfway point yet this season.

"We're just looking at the next game because it's pointless looking too far ahead. We've got to focus on where we're going to get the next win because otherwise things will look too enormous."

Leaders CARDIFF will have to find a way past the division's meanest defence as they go in search of a seventh win in the last eight league games at home to promotion-chasing STEVENAGE.

In-form PETERBOROUGH are aiming for a fifth straight win at home to READING and winger Declan Frith said: "We're on a roll now with four in a row and long may it continue."

LUTON midfielder Liam Walsh admits every day is a school day with manager Jack Wilshere.

Ahead of the visit by LEYTON ORIENT, the former England youth international said: "He had some career and I'm so lucky to be learning from one of the best.

"He doesn't overcomplicate things and, from the first day he arrived, I learned something new straight away."

LEAGUE ONE

sky bet LEAGUE ONE EFL

AFC WIMBLEDON (0) **0** **STEVENAGE** (0) **0**
ATT: 8,465

AFC Wimbledon: Bishop, Ogundere, Lewis, Johnson, Asiimwe (Hackford 81), Maycock (Sasu 69), Reeves, Smith, Seddon, Bugiel (Stevens 81), Browne. **Booked:** Reeves 64.
Stevenage: Marschall, James Wildin, Goode, Piergianni, Freestone, Malcolm (Lubala 78), Thompson (Houghton 61), White, Patterson, Phillips (Kemp 70), Reid (Young 78). **Booked:** Freestone 67, Houghton 68, White 73. **Ref:** David Rock.

BARNSLEY (2) **2** **MANSFIELD** (1) **3**
Cleary 2, Keillor-Dunn 13 Reed 25 (pen), McLaughlin 58 Lewis 83; **ATT: 12,856**

Barnsley: Cooper, Bland (McGoldrick 85), Roberts, Shepherd, Earl, Yoganathan (Phillips 67), Connell, Vickers (Farrugia 67), Kelly, Cleary (Russell 86), Keillor-Dunn.
Mansfield: Roberts, Oshilaja, Sweeney, Cargill, Hewitt, Reed, McLaughlin, Blake-Tracy, Moriah-Welsh, Lewis, Evans. **Booked:** Hewitt 33, McLaughlin 72, Cargill 90, Moriah-Welsh 90. **Ref:** Martin Coy.

BLACKPOOL (1) **1** **DONCASTER** (0) **0**
Bloxham 17 **ATT: 10,916**

Blackpool: Peacock-Farrell, Casey, Horsfall, Husband, Imray, Honeyman (Bowler 72), Brown, Morgan (Evans 72), Hamilton (Ashworth 62), Taylor (Bloxham 6), Fletcher (Banks 73). **Booked:** Honeyman 36, Horsfall 60, Morgan 67.
Doncaster: Lawlor, Bailey (Sharp 46), Pearson, McGrath (Middleton 78), Sterry (Senior 57), Broadbent, Close (Gotts 71), Maxwell, Molyneux, Clifton (Gibson 71), Hanlan. **Booked:** Broadbent 67, Bailey 86, Gotts 90. **Ref:** Matthew Corlett.

BOLTON (1) **2** **ROTHERHAM** (0) **1**
Sheehan 45, 90 Nombe 90 (pen); **ATT: 23,416**

Bolton: Sharman-Lowe, Christie, Toal, Johnston, Conway, Sheehan, Erhahon (Simons 81), Cozier-Duberry, Randall (Dempsey 81), Gale (Burstow 86), Forss (Dalby 72). **Booked:** Conway 69.
Rotherham: Dawson, Baptiste, Douglas (Holmes 81), Jules, Hall, Yearwood (Hugill 53), Powell, Gore, James, Martha, Etete (Nombe 53). **Booked:** Martha 63, Baptiste 85. **Ref:** Elliot Bell.

BRADFORD (1) **2** **WIGAN** (0) **1**
Humphrys 45, J Wright 90 Wright 63; **ATT: 22,698**

Bradford: Walker, J Wright, Baldwin, Kelly (Swan 79), Halliday (Neufville 78), Power, Metcalfe, Touray (Tilt 90), Sarcevic, Pointon (T Wright 46), Humphrys. **Booked:** Metcalfe 46, Power 65.
Wigan: Tickle, Carragher, Aimson, Fox, Smith, Murray, Weir, Wright (Asamoah 90), Borges Rodrigues, Bettoni (Francois 72), Saydee (Costelloe 76). **Booked:** Weir 27, Aimson 54. **Sent-off:** Weir 70, Smith 86. **Ref:** Sebastian Stockbridge.

BURTON ALBION (4) **5** **NORTHAMPTON** (1) **1**
Beesley 3 (pen) Eaves 39
Armer 23, Dyche 28 (og), Shade 44, 84 **ATT: 4,704**

Burton Albion: Collins, Vancooten (Akoto 90), Evans, Hartridge, Lofthouse, Williams (Krubally 73), Chauke, Armer, Larsson (Newall 90), Beesley (Scutt 90), Shade (Williamson 90). **Booked:** Williams 56, Vancooten 59, Evans 77.
Northampton: Fitzsimons, McCarthy (Burroughs 38), Dyche (Willis 46), Thorniley (Forbes 46), Hoskins (List 46), Taylor, McGeehan, Guinness-Walker, Swyer, Wheatley (Edwards 76), Eaves. **Booked:** Wheatley 51, Burroughs 75. **Ref:** Sam Mulhall.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cardiff	21	14	2	5	38	22	44
Lincoln City	22	12	5	5	32	23	41
Bradford	21	11	7	3	31	21	40
Bolton	21	10	7	4	30	20	37
Stevenage	20	10	6	4	24	15	36
Stockport Cty	21	10	5	6	29	27	35
Huddersfield	22	10	4	8	40	31	34
Luton	22	9	5	8	30	28	32
Barnsley	19	8	4	7	32	30	28
Wycombe	22	7	7	8	28	26	28
Reading	21	7	7	7	28	27	28
Leyton Orient	22	8	4	10	34	35	28
Peterborough	21	9	1	11	25	27	28
AFC Wimbledon	21	8	4	9	24	29	28
Burton Albion	21	7	6	8	23	27	27
Northampton	21	8	3	10	22	26	27
Mansfield	21	7	5	9	27	28	26
Wigan	21	6	8	7	23	25	26
Blackpool	22	7	5	10	25	30	26
Plymouth	22	8	1	13	27	37	25
Rotherham	22	6	6	10	22	29	24
Exeter	21	7	2	12	21	21	23
Doncaster	22	6	4	12	21	36	22
Port Vale	21	3	6	12	13	29	15

CARDIFF (0) **1** **EXETER** (0) **0**
Robertson 53 **ATT: 22,291**

Cardiff: Turner, Ng (Kpakio 80), Lawlor, Chambers, Bagan, Wintle, Robertson (Colwill 79), Ashford (Fish 90), Kellyman (Turnbull 79), Davies (Willock 57), Salech. **Booked:** Davies 56, Bagan 87, Chambers 89.
Exeter: Whitworth, Sweeney, Fitzwater, Woodhouse, Niskanen, Doyle-Hayes (McDonald 80), Brierley (Oakes 80), McMillan, Aitchison (Mendes Gomes 80), Wareham, Higgins (Cole 65). **Booked:** Oakes 82. **Ref:** Tom Reeves.

HUDDERSFIELD (3) **5** **PORT VALE** (0) **0**
Castledine 5, 58, Ledson 15
Radulovic 32, May 50 **ATT: 1,862**

Huddersfield: Nicholls, Balker (Roosken 69), Low, Wallace, Gooch (Sorensen 69), Harness, Ledson (Kasumu 78), Castledine (Ashia 69), Roughan, May, Radulovic (Charles 59). **Booked:** Roosken 73, Ashia 88.
P Vale: Amos, Clark, Debrah, Heneghan, Humphreys, Headley, Hall (Shipley 65), Walters, Byers, Waine (Stockley 46), Cole (Croasdale 65). **Booked:** Byers 14, Heneghan 90. **Ref:** Martin Woods.

LUTON (2) **4** **WYCOMBE** (0) **0**
Kodua 7, 44, Clark 70, Morris 78 **ATT: 11,596**

Luton: Keeley, Lonwijk, Andersen, Mengi (Odofin 76), Johnson, Walsh, Dabo (Saville 68), Kodua, Clark (Nelson 84), Bramall (Morris 76), Wells (Yates 68).
Wycombe: Norris, Grimmer, Casey, Hagelskjaer, Harvie, Henderson (Mullins 87), Quitirna (Allen 75), Westergaard (Lowry 58), Leahy (Boyd-Munce 75), Onyedinma (Huggins 87), Bell. **Booked:** Westergaard 41, Norris 79. **Ref:** Dean Whitestone.

PETERBOROUGH (0) **1** **LEYTON ORIENT** (0) **0**
Frith 90 **ATT: 9,882**

Peterborough: Bass, Kioso, Lees, Okagbue, Johnston, Woods (O'Brien-Brady 67), Collins, Garbett, Morgan (Frith 57), Lisbie, Leonard (Lindgren 85). **Booked:** Collins 22, Kioso 36.
Leyton Orient: Simkin, Craig, Beckles, Happe (James 46), Simpson, Bakinson, Moorhouse, Mitchell (Adaramola 55), Wellens (Jaiyesimi 90), O'Neill (Koroma 81), Ballard. **Booked:** Mitchell 46, James 51, Simpson 64. **Ref:** Abigail Byrne.

PLYMOUTH (0) **1** **READING** (3) **4**
Amaechi 68; **ATT: 16,434** Wing 14 (pen), 18, Doyle 20, Marriott 86

Plymouth: Hazard, Edwards (Szucs 77), Ross Jensen, Mitchell, Sorinola, Benarous (Amaechi 46), Boateng, Ralls, Mumba, Tolaj, Oseni (Wiredu 14). **Booked:** Sorinola 4. **Sent-off:** Ralls 12, **Booked:** Mitchell 66, Edwards 73.
Reading: Pereira, Yiadom (Abrefa 69), O'Connor, D Williams (Burns 71), Dorsett, Wing, Savage (Fraser 87), R Williams (Ehibhatiomhan 46), Doyle, Kyerewaa, Marriott (O'Mahony 88). **Booked:** Wing 23, Yiadom 30, Dorsett 80. **Ref:** James Durkin.

STOCKPORT COUNTY (0) **1** **LINCOLN CITY** (1) **2**
Fevrier 52; **ATT: 9,690** Hackett 28, Street 90 (pen)

Stockport C: Hinchliffe, Olowu (Hunt 78), Hills, Pye, Onyango (Fevrier 45), Norwood, Osborn, Dodgson (Edun 78), Diamond, Lowe (Mothersille 78), Wootton. **Booked:** Onyango 30, Norwood 63.
Lincoln City: Wickens, Darikwa, Hamer, Bradley, Reach, Hackett, McGrandles, Bayliss (Varfolomeyev 46), Moylan (Obikwu 88), Draper (Jefferies 74), Street (Towler 90). **Booked:** Hackett 26, Hamer 50. **Ref:** Ollie Yates.

PREMIER LEAGUE

		HOME						AWAY					
		P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1	Arsenal	18	8	1	0	22	4	5	2	2	11	7	42
2	Man City	18	8	0	1	25	6	5	1	3	18	11	40
3	Aston Villa	18	7	1	1	15	7	5	2	2	14	12	39
4	Liverpool	18	6	1	2	15	10	4	1	4	15	16	32
5	Chelsea	18	4	2	3	13	9	4	3	2	17	10	29
6	Man Utd	18	5	2	2	17	12	3	3	3	15	16	29
7	Sunderland	18	5	4	0	16	8	2	3	4	4	10	28
8	Brentford	18	6	2	1	20	10	2	0	7	8	16	26
9	Crystal Palace	18	2	4	3	9	11	5	1	3	12	9	26
10	Fulham	18	5	1	3	15	10	3	1	5	10	16	26
11	Tottenham	18	2	2	5	11	11	5	2	2	16	12	25
12	Everton	18	4	2	3	11	10	3	2	4	7	10	25
13	Brighton	18	4	4	1	16	11	2	2	5	10	14	24
14	Newcastle	18	5	2	2	16	12	1	3	5	7	11	23
15	Bournemouth	18	4	4	1	11	6	1	3	5	16	27	22
16	Leeds	18	4	3	2	17	12	1	2	6	8	20	20
17	Nottm Forest	18	3	1	5	12	15	2	2	5	6	13	18
18	West Ham	18	2	0	7	10	21	1	4	4	9	15	13
19	Burnley	18	2	2	5	7	10	1	1	7	12	24	12
20	Wolves	18	0	1	8	7	23	0	1	8	3	16	2

MAN UTD (1) **1** **NEWCASTLE** (0) **0**
Dorgu 24

ARSENAL (1) **2** **BRIGHTON** (0) **1**
Odegaard 14 Gomez 64
Rutter 52 (og)

BRENTFORD (2) **4** **BOURNEMOUTH** (0) **1**
Schade 7, 51, 90 Semenyo 75
Petrovic 39 (og)
ATT: 17,152

BURNLEY (0) **0** **EVERTON** (0) **0**
ATT: 21,637

CHELSEA (1) **1** **ASTON VILLA** (0) **2**
Joao Pedro 37 Watkins 63, 84
ATT: 39,765

LIVERPOOL (2) **2** **WOLVES** (0) **1**
Gravenberch 41 S Bueno 52
Wirtz 42 **ATT: 60,466**

NOTTM FOREST (0) **1** **MAN CITY** (0) **2**
Hutchinson 54 Reijnders 48
Cherki 83
ATT: 30,778

WEST HAM (0) **0** **FULHAM** (0) **1**
Jimenez 85
ATT: 62,464

CRYSTAL PALACE (0) **0** **TOTTENHAM** (1) **1**
Gray 42

SUNDERLAND (1) **1** **LEEDS** (0) **1**
Adingra 28 Calvert-Lewin 47
ATT: 46,675

TOP SCORERS

PREMIER LEAGUE	CHAMPIONSHIP	LEAGUE ONE	LEAGUE TWO	SCOTTISH PREM
Haaland (Man City)..........19	**Armstrong** (S'thampton) 11	**Keillor-Dunn** (Barnsley)..11	**Drinan** (Swindon)..............11	**Shankland** (Hearts).........10
Thiago (Brentford)............11	**T-Asante** (Coventry)........10	**Tolaj** (Plymouth)................11	**Dennis** (Notts County)....10	**Nygren** (Celtic)...................8
Semenyo (Bournemouth)..9	**Morris** (Derby).................10	1 for Port Vale	**Kanu** (Walsall)....................9	**Braga** (Hearts)....................8
Calvert-Lewin (Leeds)......8	**Gelhardt** (Hull)..................10	**Ballard** (Leyton Orient)..10	**Lisbie** (Colchester)............9	**Maswanhise** (Motherwell) .8
Ekitike (Liverpool)............8	**Moore** (Wrexham)............10	**Salech** (Cardiff)................10	**Cheek** (Bromley)................9	**Bowie** (Hibernian).............7

CHAMPIONSHIP

sky bet CHAMPIONSHIP EFL

BIRMINGHAM (0) **1** **DERBY** (1) **1**
Robinson 64 Agyemang 27; **ATT: 28,082**

Birmingham: Beadle, Iwata, Klarer, Robinson, Cashin (Sampsted 58), Leonard (Willumsson 78), Paik, Roberts, Stansfield, Gray (L Koumas 16 (Dykes 78)), Ducksch (Furuhashi 58). **Booked:** Klarer 49, Stansfield 71, Paik 74. **Sent-off:** Klarer 90.
Derby: Zetterstrom, Langas (Forsyth 90), Batth, Clarke, Ward, Thompson, Clark, Elder, Brereton Diaz (Adams 46), Brewster (Nelson 46), Agyemang (Jackson 85). **Booked:** Ward 29. **Sent-off:** Ward 39, **Booked:** Langas 71. **Ref:** Ben Toner.

COVENTRY (1) **1** **SWANSEA** (0) **0**
Mason-Clark 44 **ATT: 30,139**

Coventry: Rushworth, van Ewijk (Kesler-Hayden 76), Woolfenden, Kitching, Bidwell, Overgaard, Grimes, Sakamoto, Rudoni (Eccles 68), Mason-Clark (Brau 90), Simms (Wright 67).
Swansea: Vigouroux, Galbraith, Cabango, Burgess, Tymon, Goncalo Franco (Fulton 75), Stamenic, Ronald (Yalcouye 75), Cullen (Wales 80), Eom (Inoussa 59), Vipotnik (Widell 59). **Booked:** Stamenic 11, Inoussa 63. **Ref:** Sam Allison.

LEICESTER (1) **1** **WATFORD** (1) **2**
James 7 Maamma 45, Pollock 65

Leicester: Stolarczyk, Ricardo Pereira (S Thomas 87), Okoli, Nelson, L Thomas, James, Skipp (Choudhury 87), Fatawu, De Cordova-Reid (Ramsey 76), Mavididi (Monga 69), Ayew. **Booked:** Fatawu 19, Skipp 42, Mavididi 63.
Watford: Selvik, Ngakia, Pollock, Alleyne, Bola, Maamma (Sissoko 81), Kyprianou, Louza, Ince (Irankunda 66), Chakvetadze (Morris 90), Kjerrumgaard (Semedo 81). **Booked:** Louza 48, Kyprianou 61. **Ref:** Josh Smith.

MIDDLESBROUGH (0) **0** **BLACKBURN** (0) **0**
ATT: 31,475

Middlesbrough: Brynn, Brittain, Ayling, Jones (G Edmundson 17 (Fry 46)), Targett (Bangura 73), Gilbert (Browne 67), Hackney, Whittaker, Hamilton (Nypan 46), Strelec, Conway. **Booked:** Gilbert 31, Hackney 80. **Blackburn:** Pears, Miller, McLoughlin, Pratt, Litherland, Morishita (Baradji 45), Tronstad (Gardner-Hickman 76), Hedges (Pickering 76), Cantwell (Yuri Ribeiro 90), Henriksson (Dlamini 90), Ohashi. **Booked:** Morishita 32, Baradji 57. **Ref:** James Bell.

MILLWALL (0) **0** **IPSWICH** (0) **0**
ATT: 18,843

Millwall: Crocombe, Crama, Taylor, Cooper, Bryan (Sturge 83), Mitchell (Leonard 72), Doughty, Langstaff, Neghli (Bangura-Williams 82), Emakhu (Ballo 72), Ivanovic. **Booked:** Leonard 90.
Ipswich: Walton, Furlong, O'Shea, Kipre, Davis, Matusiwa, Cajuste (Taylor 71), McAteer (Walle 65), Nunez (Burns 87), Philogene-Bidace (Clarke 71), Azon (Akpom 65). **Booked:** Philogene-Bidace 49, Furlong 83. **Ref:** Tim Robinson.

NORWICH (0) **1** **CHARLTON** (0) **0**
Makama 61 **ATT: 26,594**

Norwich: Kovacevic, Fisher, McConville, Darling, Chrisene (Mahovo 68), McLean, Mattsson, Jurasek (Springett 46), Ben Slimane (Wright 46), Schwartau (Stacey 85), Makama (Kvistgaarden 84). **Booked:** Chrisene 46, Makama 64, Darling 65.
Charlton: Kaminski, Gough, Jones, Gillesphey, Coventry (Berry 85), Bree, Carey, Anderson (Docherty 60), Bell (Campbell 60), Leaburn (Kelman 71), Olaofe (Apter 71). **Booked:** Kaminski 64, Campbell 77. **Ref:** Matthew Donohue.

OXFORD UTD (1) **2** **SOUTHAMPTON** (1) **1**
Goodrham 23, Mills 89 Harwood-Bellis 29; **ATT: 11,500**

Oxford Utd: Cumming, Spencer, Helik, Brown, Currie, L Harris (Krastev 66), De Keersmaecker, Placheta (Dembele 75), Goodrham, Mills (Long 90), Prelec (Lankshear 75). **Booked:** Spencer 8, Mills 90.
Southampton: Bazunu, Harwood-Bellis, Wood-Gordon, Stephens, Fellows (Fraser 70), Downes (Romeu 56), Jander, Manning, Azaz (Archer 85), Scienza (Robinson 56), Armstrong. **Booked:** Downes 37. **Ref:** Leigh Doughty.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Coventry	23	15	6	2	54	23	51
Middlesbrough	23	12	7	4	33	24	43
Ipswich	23	10	8	5	38	23	38
Hull	23	11	5	7	39	37	38
Preston	23	9	10	4	30	23	37
Bristol City	23	10	6	7	32	25	36
Millwall	23	10	6	7	25	31	36
Watford	23	9	8	6	33	29	35
QPR	23	10	5	8	33	35	35
Stoke	23	10	4	9	28	21	34
Derby	23	8	8	7	32	31	32
Southampton	23	8	7	8	37	33	31
Wrexham	23	7	10	6	32	30	31
Leicester	23	8	7	8	32	33	31
Birmingham	23	8	6	9	31	30	30
West Brom	23	8	4	11	26	31	28
Charlton	22	7	6	9	21	27	27
Blackburn	22	7	5	10	22	26	26
Sheff Utd	23	8	2	13	31	36	26
Swansea	23	7	5	11	24	31	26
Oxford Utd	23	5	7	11	24	32	22
Portsmouth	22	5	7	10	19	29	22
Norwich	23	5	6	12	26	35	21
Sheff Wed	22	1	7	14	18	45	-8

PORTSMOUTH (1) **1** **QPR** (0) **1**
Devlin 45 Dunne 61; **ATT: 20,449**

Portsmouth: Schmid, Devlin, Matthews, Poole, Swanson, Dozzell, Kosznovszky (Pack 69), Lang, Chaplin (Yang 85), Blair (Segecic 59), Bishop. **Booked:** Segecic 62.
QPR: Hamer, Mbengue, Dunne, Cook, Norrington-Davies (Field 90), Dembele (Poku 71), Madsen, Varane (Hayden 71), Saito (Smyth 71), Burrell, Kone (Frey 85). **Booked:** Hayden 87, Norrington-Davies 88. **Ref:** James Linington.

SHEFF WED (1) **2** **HULL** (1) **2**
Ingelsson 21, Cadamarteri 60; **ATT: 27,929** Belloumi 37, Crooks 65

Sheff Wed: Charles, Iorfa, Otegbayo, Cooper, Palmer, Thornton (Shipston 79), Bannan, Ingelsson (Onukwuli 78), Amass, Cadamarteri, Lowe. **Booked:** Lowe 76, Bannan 90.
Hull: Pandur, Coyle, Egan (Famewo 46), Hughes, Giles, Belloumi (Akintola 72), Slater, Hadziahmetovic (Gyabi 68), Millar (Joseph 67), Crooks (Destan 83), McBurnie. **Booked:** Egan 28, Crooks 35, McBurnie 46, Destan 87. **Ref:** Stephen Martin.

STOKE (0) **0** **PRESTON** (0) **0**
ATT: 26,314

Stoke: Johansson, Lawal, Phillips, Wilmot, Cresswell (Gibson 40), Seko, Pearson, Manhoef, Bae (Gallagher 86), Thomas, Mubama (Bozenik 77). **Booked:** Wilmot 54, Bozenik 90, Gibson 90, Pearson 90.
Preston: Iversen, Offiah, Storey, Hughes, Valentin, Armstrong (Frokjaer-Jensen 72), Whiteman, McCann (Thompson 67), Small (Lewis 84), Smith, Jebbison (Devine 72). **Booked:** Valentin 16, McCann 62. **Ref:** Thomas Kirk.

WEST BROM (0) **1** **BRISTOL CITY** (2) **2**
Diakite 85; **ATT: 25,050** Mehmeti 4, McCrorie 22

West Brom: Wildsmith, Campbell, Phillips, Mepham, Taylor (Mowatt 57), Diakite, Styles (Dike 77), Johnston, Price (Iling-Junior 65), Ahearne-Grant, Heggebo. **Booked:** Diakite 58.
Bristol City: O'Leary, Vyner, Dickie, Pring, McCrorie (Tanner 76), Knight, Randell, Borges (Atkinson 65), Twine (Roberts 90), Mehmeti (Armstrong 65), Jakobsen (Hirakawa 76). **Booked:** Mehmeti 16, McCrorie 45, Pring 62. **Ref:** Will Finnie.

WREXHAM (2) **5** **SHEFF UTD** (3) **3**
Bindon 9 (og), Moore 28, 76 Bamford 7, 15, O'Hare 24
Longman 52, Windass 81 (pen) **ATT: 10,611**

Wrexham: Okonkwo, Cleworth, Hyam, Doyle, Longman, James, Sheaf, Thomason, Windass (Rodriguez 90), Moore (Smith 82), Broadhead (Rathbone 85). **Booked:** Longman 67.
Sheff Utd: Cooper, Seriki, Tanganga, Bindon, McCallum (Ings 86), Arblaster, Riedewald (Soumare 72), Chong (Burrows 63), O'Hare (Brooks 84), Hamer, Bamford (Campbell 74). **Booked:** Hamer 65, Bindon 80. **Ref:** Andrew Kitchen.

WEEK AHEAD

(7.45 unless stated)

TODAY

Sky Bet Championship
Birmingham v S'thampton (8.15)
Coventry v Ipswich (6)
Leicester v Derby
Middlesbrough v Hull
Millwall v Bristol City
Norwich v Watford
Oxford Utd v Swansea
Portsmouth v Charlton
Sheff Wed v Blackburn
Stoke v Sheff Utd
West Brom v QPR
Wrexham v Preston

Sky Bet League One
AFC Wimbledon v Exeter
Barnsley v Lincoln City
Blackpool v Rotherham
Bolton v Mansfield
Bradford v Port Vale
Burton Albion v Wigan
Cardiff v Stevenage
Huddersfield v Northampton
Luton v Leyton Orient
Peterborough v Reading
Plymouth v Wycombe
Stockport County v Doncaster

Sky Bet League Two
Accrington v Harrogate Town
Bristol Rovers v Barnet
Cheltenham v Swindon
Chesterfield v Cambridge Utd
Crawley Town v Bromley
Gillingham v Colchester
Grimsby v Shrewsbury
MK Dons v Notts County
Newport C v Crewe (7.30)
Salford City v Fleetwood Town
Tranmere v Barrow
Walsall v Oldham

TOMORROW

Premier League
Arsenal v Aston Villa (8.15)
Burnley v Newcastle (7.30)
Chelsea v Bournemouth (7.30)
Man Utd v Wolves (8.15)
Nottm Forest v Everton (7.30)
West Ham v Brighton (7.30)

Enterprise National League
Aldershot v Wealdstone
Altrincham v York
Boreham Wood v Solihull M
Boston Utd v Brackley
Carlisle v Morecambe
Forest Green v Truro City
Rochdale v Hartlepool
Scunthorpe v Gateshead
Southend v Sutton Utd
Tamworth v FC Halifax
Woking v Braintree Town
Yeovil v Eastleigh

William Hill Scottish Prem
Dundee v Kilmarnock
Hibernian v Aberdeen
Livingston v Dundee Utd
Motherwell v Celtic (8)
Rangers v St Mirren

(3 unless stated)

NEW YEARS DAY

Premier League
Crystal Palace v Fulham (5.30)
Liverpool v Leeds (5.30)
Brentford v Tottenham (8)
Sunderland v Man City (8)

Sky Bet Championship
Blackburn v Wrexham (12.30)
Bristol City v Portsmouth
Charlton v Coventry
Derby v Middlesbrough
Hull v Stoke
Ipswich v Oxford Utd
Preston v Sheff Wed
QPR v Norwich
Sheff Utd v Leicester (5.30)
Southampton v Millwall
Swansea v West Brom
Watford v Birmingham

Sky Bet League One
Doncaster v Bolton
Exeter v Luton
Leyton Orient v Wimbledon
Lincoln City v Huddersfield
Mansfield v Bradford
Northampton v Stockport C
Port Vale v Blackpool
Reading v Burton Albion
Rotherham v Peterborough
Stevenage v Plymouth
Wigan v Barnsley
Wycombe v Cardiff

Sky Bet League Two
Barnet v Crawley Town
Barrow v Salford City
Bromley v Newport County
Cambridge Utd v Walsall
Colchester v MK Dons
Crewe v Cheltenham
Fleetwood Town v Grimsby
Harrogate T v Tranmere
Notts County v Accrington
Oldham v Chesterfield
Shrewsbury v Bristol E
Swindon v Gillingham

SATURDAY

Premier League
Bournemouth v Arsenal (5.30)
A Villa v Nottm Forest (12.30)
Brighton v Burnley
Wolves v West Ham

Enterprise National League
Aldershot v Solihull Moors
Altrincham v Morecambe
Boreham Wood v York
Boston Utd v Eastleigh
Carlisle v Wealdstone
Forest Green v FC Halifax
Rochdale v Brackley
Scunthorpe v Sutton Utd
Southend v Truro City
Tamworth v Gateshead
Woking v Hartlepool
Yeovil v Braintree Town (5.30)

William Hill Scottish Prem
Celtic v Rangers (12.30)
Dundee Utd v Dundee
Falkirk v Aberdeen
Hearts v Livingston
Kilmarnock v Hibernian
Motherwell v St Mirren

William Hill Scottish Ch'ship
Airdrieonians v Raith
Ayr v Queen's Park
Dunfermline v Ross County
Partick v Morton
St Johnstone v Arbroath

William Hill Scottish League 1
Cove Rangers v Montrose
Hamilton v East Fife
Inverness CT v Peterhead
Kelty Hearts v Alloa
Stenh'semuir v Queen of South

William Hill Scottish Lge 2
Clyde v Forfar
Elgin v East Kilbride
Spartans v Dumbarton
Stirling v Annan Athletic
Stranraer v Edinburgh City

1-2-X CHECK

POOLS NUMBER	FULL TIME
1	1
2	1
3	2
4	1a
5	1a
6	1
7	3
8	1a
9	L
10	L
11	L
12	L
13	L
14	L
15	L
16	L
17	L
18	L
19	L
20	L
21	L
22	L
23	L
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25	L
26	L
27	L
28	L
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30	L
31	L
32	L
33	L
34	L
35	L
36	L
37	L
38	L
39	L
40	L
41	L
42	L
43	L
44	L
45	3
46	1
47	1a
48	1
49	2

LEAGUE TWO

sky bet LEAGUE TWO EFL

ACCRINGTON STANLEY (1) **2** **BARROW** (1) **1**
Ward 30, Woods 90 McCann 41; **ATT: 2,980**

Accrington Stanley: Wright, Love, Matthews, Ward, O'Brien (Sass 86), Grant, Henderson, Heath, Whalley, Sinclair, Caton (Woods 69). **Barrow:** Stanway, Raglan, Canavan, Shipley, Whitfield (Newby 69), Williams, Smith (Mahoney 76), McCann (Earing 76), Barkhuizen (Jackson 69), Gordon, Hemmings (Fletcher 34). **Booked:** Gordon 36, McCann 57. **Ref:** Edward Duckworth.

BRISTOL ROVERS (2) **2** **BROMLEY** (0) **3**
Sparkes 34, Cavegn 40 Kabamba 68
ATT: 8,127 Thompson 81, 90

Bristol Rovers: Southwood, Moore, Kilgour (Lockyer 75), Mola, Sparkes, McEachran, Conteh, Cotterill (Akono Bilongo 62), Forde, Cavegn, Thomas (Dewsbury 74). **Booked:** Forde 12, Cotterill 46. **Sent-off:** Forde 53, **Booked:** Cavegn 90.
Bromley: Smith, Ifill (Ilunga 79), Sowunmi, Elerewe, Odutayo, Charles, Whitely (Kabamba 46), Krauhaus (Thompson 79), Hondermarck (Arthurs 46), Pinnock, Cheek. **Booked:** Kabamba 70. **Ref:** Jacob Miles.

CHELTENHAM (2) **3** **SHREWSBURY** (0) **1**
Adelakun 14 Marquis 63
Bickerstaff 31, Hutchinson 54 (pen) **ATT: 5,553**

Cheltenham: Day, Jude-Boyd, Cundy, Wilson, Tomkinson, Young, Stevenson, Hutchinson (Archer 75), Thomas (Martin 89), Bickerstaff, Adelakun (Taylor 86). **Booked:** Day 70, Jude-Boyd 89.
Shrewsbury: Brook, Hoole, Anderson, Boyle, Kabia, Perry, Ruffels, Clucas, Scully (McDermott 69), Lloyd (Sang 78), Marquis. **Booked:** Boyle 73, McDermott 90, Perry 90. **Ref:** Richard Eley.

CHESTERFIELD (0) **2** **NOTTS COUNTY** (0) **0**
Bonis 65, Roos 76 (og) **ATT: 10,059**

Chesterfield: Hemming, Tanton, McFadzean, Grimes, Gordon, Naylor (Fleck 90), Stirk, Mandeville, Darcy (Berry-McNally 79), Duffy (Dickson 78), Bonis (Grigg 78). **Booked:** McFadzean 15, Naylor 19, Grimes 36.
Notts County: Roos, Macari, Platt, Bedeau, Norburn (Kouhyar 73), Tsaroulla (Jones 73), Grant (Hall 64), Iorpenda, Bennetts (Gordon 46), Jatta, Dennis. **Booked:** Dennis 48, Tsaroulla 68, Macari 87. **Ref:** Ben Speedie.

CRAWLEY TOWN (1) **1** **COLCHESTER** (1) **1**
Brown 13 Lisbie 20; **ATT: 3,993**

Crawley T: Davies, Barker, Conroy, Flint, Pereira (Watson 85), Williams, Bajrami (Holohan 59), Forster (Adeyemo 70), Brown (Tshimanga 70), Roles (McKirdy 59), Loft. **Booked:** Williams 68, Watson 90.
Colchester: Macey, Vincent-Young, Tucker, Araujo, Iandolo, Bishop (Hunt 76), Read, Lisbie (Edwards 76), Mbick (Goodwin 75), Anderson, Tovide (Payne 56). **Booked:** Tovide 31, Mbick 57. **Ref:** Alan Young.

GILLINGHAM (0) **1** **CAMBRIDGE UTD** (1) **1**
Clark 72 Appere 10; **ATT: 7,344**

Gillingham: Turner, Hutton, A Smith, Gale, Clark, McKenzie, Little, Coleman (Dack 65), Nevitt (Palmer-Houlden 65), Rowe, Andrews. **Booked:** Rowe 85.
Cambridge Utd: Eastwood, Bennett (Purrington 67), Gibbons, Jobe, Watts, Mayor, Brophy (McLoughlin 67), Hoddle, Mpanzu, KaiKai (Kachunga 79), Appere (Lavery 80). **Ref:** Neil Hair.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Walsall	22	13	4	5	31	19	43
Bromley	22	12	6	4	37	25	42
Swindon	22	12	4	6	35	26	40
MK Dons	22	11	6	5	43	24	39
Salford City	22	12	3	7	33	30	39
Notts County	22	11	5	6	35	24	38
Chesterfield	22	10	8	4	39	31	38
Cambridge Utd	22	9	8	5	25	19	35
Fleetwood Town	22	9	6	7	32	29	33
Colchester	22	8	8	6	36	27	32
Crewe	22	9	5	8	34	29	32
Gillingham	22	7	10	5	30	25	31
Barnet	22	7	8	7	28	25	29
Tranmere	22	7	8	7	36	34	29
Oldham	22	6	10	6	21	17	28
Grimsby	22	7	7	8	33	30	28
Accrington Stanley	22	7	6	9	25	26	27
Cheltenham	22	8	3	11	21	35	27
Barrow	22	5	6	11	22	32	21
Crawley Town	22	4	7	11	26	37	19
Shrewsbury	22	4	7	11	21	37	19
Bristol Rovers	22	5	3	14	18	42	18
Harrogate Town	22	4	5	13	18	36	17
Newport County	22	3	5	14	21	41	14

GRIMSBY (0) **0** **OLDHAM** (0) **0**
ATT: 7,686

Grimsby: Smith, Rodgers, Tharme, McJannett, Sweeney (Staunton 90), Turi (Walker 71), Burns (Amaluzor 71), Green, McEachran, Vernam, Kabia (Soonsup-Bell 83). **Booked:** McJannett 90.
Oldham: Hudson, Ogle (Caprice 79), Simeu, Monthe, Robson, Woods, Pett (Drummond 83), Payne, Hammond (Hannant 56), Mellon (Harratt 56), Garner. **Booked:** Garner 50, Ogle 77. **Ref:** Ross Joyce.

MK DONS (1) **1** **SWINDON** (0) **0**
Nemane 17 **ATT: 9,839**

MK Dons: MacGillivray, Sanders, Ekpiteta, Offord, Jones (Lemonheigh-Evans 89), Collar (Thompson-Sommers 63), Gilbey, Kelly, Nemane (Mellish 63), Collins (Hepburn-Murphy 70), Paterson. **Booked:** Collar 38.
Swindon: Ripley, Wright, Knight-Lebel, Tafazolli (Ball 72), Munroe (Palmer 59), Nichols, Kilkenny, McGregor (Snowdon 60), Oldaker (Tabor 88), Glatzel, Bodin (Ehibhatiomhan 72). **Booked:** Munroe 21, Oldaker 53. **Ref:** Ben Atkinson.

NEWPORT COUNTY (0) **0** **BARNET** (0) **0**
ATT: 4,219

Newport County: Wright, Thomas, Jenkins, Baker, Clarke (Smith 73), Davies (Shephard 65), Spellman (Lloyd 72), Brennan, Braybrooke, Antwi (Baker-Richardson 72), Opoku (Kamwa 85). **Booked:** Brennan 90.
Barnet: Slicker, Kizzi, Collinge, Tavares, Senior, Glover, Shelton, Ofoborh, Kanu (Adeniran 63), Ndlovu (Hawkins 73), Assombalonga (Stead 63). **Ref:** Stephen Parkinson.

SALFORD CITY (0) **1** **HARROGATE TOWN** (0) **0**
Udoh 76 (pen) **ATT: 2,911**

Salford City: Young, Cooper (Turton 63), Oluwo, Garbutt, Grant, Longelo (Berkoe 90), Cesay, Austerfield (Butcher 63), N'Mai, Udoh, Borini (Stockton 63). **Booked:** Longelo 55.
Harrogate Town: Belshaw, O'Connor, Bradbury (Burrell 45), Jameson (Falkingham 86), Asare, Fox (McCoulsky 79), Evans, Slater, McAleny, Smith, Cursons. **Booked:** O'Connor 32. **Ref:** Jamie O'Connor.

TRANMERE (1) **1** **FLEETWOOD TOWN** (0) **0**
Whitaker 23 **ATT: 7,933**

Tranmere: Murphy, McGowan (Norman 46), Smith, Turnbull (Smallwood 84), Joseph, Finley, Blacker (Kenneh 65), Bristow, Whitaker, Dennis (Ironside 66), Jennings (Davison 66). **Booked:** Bristow 11, Blacker 33, Dennis 37, Smith 80, Whitaker 90.
Fleetwood Town: Lynch, Mullarkey, Potter, Hughes (McCann 71), Bonds (Neal 71), Ennis, Virtue (J Davies 63), Helm, Medley, W Davies (Graydon 63), Evans. **Booked:** Neal 76, Evans 90. **Ref:** Dale Baines.

WALSALL (1) **1** **CREWE** (0) **0**
Matt 45 **ATT: 7,609**

Walsall: Roberts, Browne, Flint, Weir, Barrett, Jellis (Clarke 46), Comley, Finnigan (Lakin 90), Harper (Okeke 90), Matt (Pressley 73), Kanu (Adomah 72). **Booked:** Harper 90.
Crewe: Waller, Finney (Mingi 78), Connolly, Billington, Hutchinson, Powell (Moult 68), Sanders, O'Reilly, Lunt (Rankine 83), Agius (Bogle 68), March (Holicek 68). **Booked:** Billington 63, Holicek 79. **Ref:** Simon Mather.

SCOTTISH ROUND-UP

BEATEN HEARTS SET TO BE TOPPLED

HEARTS could be knocked off top spot by the time they return to action after their damaging 3-2 derby defeat at HIBS reduced their advantage at the top to three points.

CELTIC play twice, including Saturday's Old Firm clash with RANGERS, before Derek McInnes' side host LIVINGSTON at the weekend.

The Tynecastle boss hopes the arrival of fresh faces in January will help his side "go again" in the second half of the season.

Hearts have agreed a pre-contract with Kazakhstan winger Islam Chesnokov, with St Johnstone forward Josh McPake and Dutch defender Jordi Altena lined up for moves next month.

McInnes (right) said: "We have got Chesnokov coming in and we're quite far down the line with one or two others."

Celtic have conceded 13 goals in six games under Wilfried Nancy, the first four of them defeats, and the Frenchman admitted they contributed to the "chaos" after coming from behind twice in an untidy 4-2 win at bottom side Livingston.

They travel to MOTHERWELL tomorrow, and Nancy said: "It's only been two weeks that we are together, but step by step the players understand what I want."

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MOZA BITE HITS AUBA

First win sweet 16 for Mambas

PIERRE-EMERICK AUBAMEYANG could not stop MOZAMBIQUE claiming a first-ever victory in the Africa Cup of Nations at the 16th attempt.

The former Arsenal and Chelsea striker looked to have sparked a potential comeback for GABON with his goal in the fifth minute of first-half stoppage time after Mozambique had scored twice.

But the Mambas, who had drawn five and lost 10 of their previous 15 matches in the competition, hit back seven minutes into the second half and held on for an historic 3-2 win.

Beaten in their tournament curtain-raiser by Ivory Coast, Mozambique put themselves in a healthy position in Agadir when Faizal Bangal headed home from a corner on 37 minutes before Geny Catamo netted from the penalty spot five minutes later.

Aubameyang then converted a rebound to pull one back for Gabon before the break, becoming the second-oldest goalscorer in AFCON history at 36 years and six months, behind only Hossam Hassan (39y, 5m).

Diogo Calila restored Mozambique's two-goal cushion with a header, only for Alex Moucketou-Moussounda to pull another back for Gabon on 76 minutes and make for a nervy finish.

But Calila's effort was ultimately enough to seal a maiden win for Mozambique at their sixth appearance.

The victory moved Mozambique level on three points in the group alongside Ivory Coast and Cameroon, who beat Gabon on Christmas Eve. Gabon need to win their final group game to have any chance of reaching the next round.

Elsewhere, Riyad Mahrez slotted home a first-half penalty (above) as ALGERIA beat BURKINA FASO 1-0 in Rabat to join Nigeria and Egypt in the knockout stages.

Algeria captain Mahrez netted in the 23rd minute, after Ismahila Ouedraogo's foul on Rayan Ait-Nouri, to notch his third goal of the tournament.

An own goal from Saul Coco saw SUDAN edge out EQUATORIAL GUINEA 1-0 to get their AFCON campaign going.

Coco put the ball into his own net in the 74th minute of a match both nations needed to win after losing their opening Group E fixtures.

Amad Diallo made it two goals in two games for IVORY COAST as the holders drew 1-1 with CAMEROON.

The Manchester United winger hit a superb curling strike from outside the box on 51 minutes.

But their lead lasted just five minutes as a shot from Cameroon's Junior Tchamadeu went in off Ghislain Konan.

IT'S A DIOGOAL
Calila's header bounces past Gabon keeper Mbaba to seal a historic victory